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LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
SIR WILFRID LAURIER
VOLUME II

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WILFRID LAURIER
Prime Minister of Canada, 1896-1911
(1907)

**LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
SIR WILFRID LAURIER**

**BY
OSCAR DOUGLAS SKELTON**

**ILLUSTRATED WITH
PHOTOGRAPHS**

VOLUME II

**S. B. GUNDY
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**LIFE AND LETTERS OF SIR
WILFRID LAURIER**



LIFE AND LETTERS OF SIR WILFRID LAURIER

CHAPTER X

THE FIRST LAURIER MINISTRY

Speeding the Parting Guest—Forming the Ministry—The Laurier-Greenway Settlement—An Episcopal Challenge—An Appeal to Rome—The Beginning of Prosperity—The Opening of the West—The British Preference.

AFTER eighteen years' wandering in the wilderness of opposition, for half the time under Wilfrid Laurier's leadership, the Liberal party had come to power. For fifteen years, the longest unbroken stretch of authority in the country's annals, Mr. Laurier was destined to remain prime minister of Canada. They were to be years crowded with opportunity and with responsibility, a testing-time sufficient to search out every strength and every weakness of the leader or of his administration. It was Mr. Laurier's fortune, and Canada's, that he was to be in control of the country's affairs at the most creative and formative period in its history, in the years when the Dominion was attaining at once industrial maturity and national status.

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In June, 1896, these things lay hidden in the future. The immediate question was, when would the defeated ministry resign? Since Mackenzie's resignation in 1878, it had been accepted doctrine that in the event of a decisive defeat a ministry would not await the assembling of parliament and a formal vote of want of confidence, but would resign at once. Sir Charles Tupper made no undue haste in retiring. It was necessary to wind up the work of the departments. It was still more necessary to use the vanishing powers of appointment to reward past service and to buttress future positions. A long list of new senators, judges, Queen's Counsel, revising officers, inland-revenue collectors, was drawn up and presented to the governor-general, Lord Aberdeen, for his formal approval. Lord Aberdeen hesitated to sanction the more important nominations. As the last parliament had voted supplies only until June 30, and as Sir Charles Tupper had not formed his government until after parliament had prorogued, "the acts of the present administration," the governor-general held, "are in an unusual degree provisional." The Senate, after twenty-four years of Conservative and five of Liberal appointments, was overwhelmingly Conservative, and to fill all the remaining vacancies with Sir Charles's nominees would not only keep the scales loaded against the new government for many a year, but would embarrass it seriously at the very outset, blocking Sir Oliver Mowat's accession to the cabinet. The Bench, again, would be overwhelmingly Conservative. On this ground the governor-general, using the

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discretion the constitution gave him, finally declined to accept his advisers' advice. Sir Charles, after a vigorous protest against this "unwarranted invasion of responsible government," and an endeavour to buttress up his position by appeals to Todd's authority and Mackenzie's example, treated the governor-general's refusal to sign the appointments as an indication of want of confidence; on July 8 he resigned the seals of office, but he never forgave the speeding of the parting guest. The next day Lord Aberdeen called upon Mr. Laurier to form a new administration.

It was not a difficult task to find sufficient cabinet timber. The difficulty was rather an embarrassment of riches. There were many potential ministers, and few portfolios,—fewer, alas, than might have been, had not Liberals in the unrecking days of opposition denounced as extravagant the creation of every new department.¹ There were many interests to weigh.

¹ Replying some time later to a Liberal member, James McMullen, who had in opposition been a stern critic of government expenditure, counting every year the silver spoons in Rideau Hall, and who now queried the establishment of ministers of Customs and of Inland Revenue of full cabinet rank, Sir Wilfrid wrote:

"I know, my dear McMullen, that you have always taken a very strong view on this subject. You have always been of the opinion that the number of cabinet ministers ought to be reduced. You know that this is a subject as to which I could not agree with you. I have always holden to the view that to govern effectively a country like Canada with a population spread over such a very large territory, and with the necessity of giving cabinet representation to all sections, no prime minister could undertake to reduce the cabinet. . . . Supposing you were to drop one cabinet minister, that would be an economy of \$7,000, but if the reduction was from the province of Ontario, I do not believe that the people of Ontario would be satisfied. The comparison is often made between Canada and the United States in this respect. The United States has only seven cabinet ministers, but you must remember that these ministers have no legislative duties; they can give all their time to the administration of their departments.

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Mr. Laurier had to hold the balance fairly between his own parliamentary followers and the men in the provincial administrations, between the old Liberal war horses and the eleventh-hour converts, between past service and future capacity, between debating skill and executive power, between province and province and between section and section, allotting Quebec its English-speaking Protestant minister and Ontario its Irish Catholic minister. But the range of choice had been closely narrowed before the election, and it was only necessary now to make some last-moment shifts because of election fatalities or personal idiosyncracies. By July 13 all the new ministers but three had been sworn in.

Mr. Laurier, profiting by the experience of Mackenzie and of Macdonald, determined not to take charge of a department. That would have meant that either, as in Mackenzie's day, the work of policy shaping and party guiding or, as in Macdonald's day, the work of the department would often go undone. As President of the Council, he would be free to give to all the tasks of the government the general supervision he had planned.

For the important portfolios of Justice, Finance and Railways, Mr. Laurier turned to the provinces. Sir Oliver Mowat, appointed to the senatorial vacancy which Sir Charles Tupper had sought to preëempt, be-

"I have given this question very ample consideration, and as I am responsible for the guidance of the party in these matters, I think I can claim that our friends generally should give way to my own judgment in this instance, the amount involved after all not being very considerable."

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came Minister of Justice. Thirty-three years before, young Oliver Mowat had joined the short-lived Sandfield Macdonald-Dorion ministry as Postmaster-General. It was a strange turn of the wheel that brought him back to the central government after a generation's work in other fields, and stranger still the lot which gave him charge of the department against which he had waged so many persistent and so many successful constitutional battles. Though he no longer had the force or the interest in affairs which had marked his prime, Sir Oliver was still full of sage counsel. In the cabinet, his half-century's experience and his shrewd knowledge of men helped a dozen strong ministers of individual ways and training to become a team; while to the Scotch Presbyterian voters, his presence in the ministry was unimpeachable proof of its thorough soundness and respectability. William Stevens Fielding, for twenty years a Halifax newspaper man, for another ten premier and unquestioned master in his native province, gave up his Nova Scotia post to become Minister of Finance. In central and western Canada he was not well known, but it was not long before his caution and efficiency in administration and his hard-hitting power in debate had given him a foremost place in parliament and in party council. Andrew George Blair, premier of New Brunswick, who had been equally at home in Liberal and in coalition ministries, was a more uncertain quantity, shrewd, undoubtedly experienced in all the ways and wiles of the most efficient school of politics (New Brunswick) in America, and as a Maritime-prov-

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ince man, he was thoroughly familiar with the traffic and patronage potentialities of the Intercolonial, now assigned to his charge as Minister of Railways and Canals. From the West it was understood that a member of the Manitoba administration might be chosen to take charge of the Department of the Interior, but for the time the post was left unfilled.

From his Quebec followers in parliament, Mr. Laurier chose three men for portfolios. Israel Tarte, defeated in Beauharnois, but elected later by acclamation in St. Johns-Iberville, took charge of the largest spending department, Public Works, the department which he had assailed and exposed in his Langevin charges. Henri Joly de Lotbinière, member-elect for Portneuf, premier of Quebec for a brief space after the Letellier coup d'état, leader of the provincial Liberals until Mercier's union with the Castors in the Riel days, a Protestant who had won the confidence of a Catholic province, a seigneur who embodied the finest traditions of courtesy and honour of his order, a man for whom Wilfrid Laurier had profound respect and natural sympathy, became Controller of Inland Revenue. Sydney Fisher, one of the few men of leisure in Canadian politics, who had followed his university training by public service in politics and in progressive farming in the Eastern Townships, was now back in parliament after a term's absence spent largely in the political organization of Quebec. Though labelled by his critics "gentleman farmer," he was still a farmer, and immensely better fitted for his new post as Min-

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ister of Agriculture than the lawyers and doctors and brewers and near-farmers who had preceded him. Two members joined the cabinet without portfolio: C. A. Geoffrion, a leader of the Montreal bar, and professor of civil law in McGill, fellow office-bearer with Wilfrid Laurier thirty years before in L'Institut Canadien, brother of the Felix Geoffrion who had been his colleague in Mackenzie's ministry, and son-in-law of Antoine Aimé Dorion, and R. R. Dobell, head of the well-known Quebec lumbering firm, who had been half detached from the Conservative party by the McGreevy scandals, and had fully accepted the Liberal platform on the trade and school issues in the late election. Charles Fitzpatrick, another citizen of old Quebec who had won fame as counsel for Riel in 1885, and for Mercier and for McGreevy and Connolly in later days, and had held a seat in the provincial house from 1890, when he had declined a post in the De Boucherville Conservative ministry, until 1896, took the Solicitor-Generalship, which by custom formed part of the ministry but not of the inner cabinet where general policy was determined.

Among Ontario members of the federal party, Sir Richard Cartwright stood foremost in service and repute. It had been assumed by many that upon a Liberal victory he would return to his old post of Finance. But he had made many enemies. Though it was not true, as rumour ran, that a deputation of bankers had protested to Laurier against his reappointment, in the eyes of the business world he was identified, rightly or wrongly, with a policy of doctrinaire and ruthless free

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trade. In determining to offer the portfolio of Finance to Fielding rather than to Cartwright, Laurier was influenced not so much by the desire to reassure the business world as by his conviction that for this most important of all the ministry's tasks, the tried administrative capacity and balanced judgment and the younger years of William Fielding were the qualities most needed. Mr. Fielding's acceptance was contingent on Sir Richard's assent. To Sir Richard the post of Minister of Trade and Commerce was offered. He took the post, and gave loyal service to the country and to the party for many a year, but never again with the old joy and confidence in combat, and never with complete confidence in all his colleagues. William Mulock, Toronto lawyer and York farmer, known at election times as "Farmer Bill," the most vigorous and able of the Ontario group, a good fighter, a good hater, of dominating will and high ambition, became Postmaster-General. Richard W. Scott, member of Assembly and Commons and Senate since 1857, and famed as the maker of the Act of 1868 which firmly established Upper Canada's separate schools, and of the Act of 1878 which gave counties local option to prohibit the retail sale of liquor, was chosen Secretary of State. William Paterson, a successful manufacturer who had coined the cry which had done much service, "Has the N. P. made *you* rich?" a speaker of stentorian power, slashing in debate, but too kindly ever to leave a smarting wound, became Controller of Customs. His post, like Sir Henri Joly's, was not of cabinet rank, representing, as it did, Thompson's

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experiment in under-secretaryship, but at the first session both were made full ministerial and cabinet positions.

From the Maritime provinces, besides Fielding and Blair, two ministers were chosen. Louis H. Davies, lawyer, bank president, premier in the Island, member at Ottawa since 1882, had been for many sessions the foremost Maritime Liberal, and so predestined for the portfolio of Marine and Fisheries. Frederick Borden, doctor, banker, militia surgeon, had held a seat in every parliament but one since 1874, and by his long interest in military matters had qualified for new honours as Minister of Militia and Defence.

When all the posts were filled, there were seventeen ministers, including two without portfolio, or one ministerial place for every seven Liberal members. Even so, many men of outstanding ability and service could not be included. Of the Quebec members, many were young, and were yet to earn their spurs. From Ontario there were men of experience and personality, John Charlton, James Sutherland, James Lister, George E. Casey, George Landerkin, M. C. Cameron, John Macmillan, W. C. Edwards, Thomas Bain, who continued to give effective service as whips or private members. James D. Edgar, one of the most aggressive of the Ontario delegation, was elected Speaker of the Commons. One expected name was missing,—that of David Mills. His long service, his rank as the senior Ontario member and his mastery of constitutional issues, had marked him out for cabinet rank again. But

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he had been defeated in his old riding. It would have been possible to find a seat for him in the Senate, as was done for Sir Oliver, or in the Commons, as was done for William Paterson, who also had gone down in his home constituency, if Mills had been deemed indispensable. As it was, assurance was given of a cabinet post later; and when in November, 1897, Oliver Mowat resigned to become Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, David Mills was appointed Minister of Justice. Perhaps more serious, for the party's future, was the inability to find cabinet place for Dr. Benjamin Russell or for D. C. Fraser, of the Nova Scotia contingent. One very interesting experiment was blocked by death. D'Alton McCarthy, to whom in earlier days the French tongue and the Catholic religion had been anathema, had in time so broadened and mellowed that he came to look forward with pride to serving under a French-speaking and Catholic premier. It had just been arranged, in 1898, that he should enter the Laurier government, as Minister of Justice, when his death, resulting from a runaway accident, ended an alliance which might have had a material bearing on the future of Liberalism in Ontario.¹

As it was, the ministry was an extraordinarily able one,—none so strong before or since. In individuality,

¹D'Alton McCarthy at Owen Sound, April 30, 1896: "I am no longer a Tory; I was kicked out of the party. I am not a Liberal, for they will not let me in. I stand, however, to do right, and I do not care a straw whether I have to oppose Grit or Tory. . . . I want to see that government voted out. I would be well pleased to see Mr. Laurier come in. Any change must be for the better. No change can be for the worse. If the Liberal party goes in, and I think it will, I shall do what lies in my power to keep them straight as I did the Conservatives."

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in varied ability, in administrative capacity, in constructive vision, in internal unity and in integrity, it could safely challenge comparison. Time was to dull the edge of zeal, to emphasize differences, to sap moral resistance, in more than one case, but that was in the twilight hour; the morning was full of high promise.

The cabinet's first task was to settle the Manitoba school question. Until this was done, there could be no peace, no opportunity for constructive work. The eleventh-hour negotiations between Ottawa and Winnipeg and the result of the elections had made clear the bounds within which agreements must be sought. It was clear that a federal remedial law was out of the question except as an absolutely last resort; that relief for the minority must come by provincial legislation; that the province would not consider for a moment the re-establishment of separate schools, but that there was a possibility of securing provision for separate religious teaching and similar adjustments within the framework of the existing system. Preliminary discussions with Mr. Greenway and Mr. Sifton indicated the possibility of agreement, and accordingly it was considered unnecessary to appoint the commission of inquiry suggested when the two governments stood apart.

In August, after some preliminary correspondence, Messrs. Sifton, Watson and Cameron, of the Manitoba government, came to Ottawa, and there threshed out the solution with a sub-committee of the cabinet. It became apparent that the three points upon which con-

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cession might be made were: separate religious exercises, a teacher of the minority's faith, and the use of the French language in the schools. To reach agreement upon details, as for example, whether the minimum attendance essential to secure the first two privileges should be sixty, as the province proposed, or a smaller number, and to debate the possibility of further concessions as to text-books, teachers' licenses, and administration, weeks of consideration were required. It was not until the middle of November that a settlement was effected.

In the meantime the question had arisen as to how far the minority could be brought into the agreement. It was desirable to secure their assent to an agreement made in their behalf; yet it was plain that so far as their ecclesiastical spokesmen were concerned they would not formally assent to anything short of the impossible. Whether consulted or not consulted, they would make trouble. One of the leading representatives of the minority, Mr. Prendergast, who had resigned his post in the Greenway cabinet when the measures of 1890 were passed, was consulted, and agreed that the compromise proposed was the best attainable. Through Israel Tarte, Mgr. Langevin was sounded, with results less happy than the sanguine Minister of Public Works foretold:

(Israel Tarte to Wilfrid Laurier — Translation)

Winnipeg, 8 November, 1896.

MY DEAR MR. LAURIER:

. . . This is how things stand: Archbishop Langevin stands firm for the right to organize Catholic school districts. In

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other words, he demands the re-establishment of separate schools, which, as you know, is out of the question. I have not shown him the agreement, for I believe that he would immediately have taken advantage of it to raise a row. The priests who surround him are fanatical and full of prejudice. The Archbishop, however, seems to me to be coming back to a more moderate position, and I do not think he will make a disturbance. Our relations have been very cordial. I have tried to learn his views and to pacify him, by making him realize more clearly the unfortunate side of the present situation for Catholics. In fact, half the French schools are closed and about 1500 French-Canadian children are to-day without instruction.

Prendergast and the most intelligent among the French-Canadians will support our arrangement. I enclose an interview prepared by Mr. Prendergast which should be given to the press the day of the publication of the agreement—not before.

A long habit of absolute submission to the clergy has made my mission here very difficult. Everyone is scared. Further, we have no support in the Catholic press of Manitoba, and our friends are left to the mercy of the "Manitoba" and of the "North-West Review," which is edited by Father Drummond and is extremely violent. . . .

In brief, the position is this: The French Liberals, guided by Prendergast, will support us, and within a year at latest, practically the whole community will have accepted the situation effected by the present agreement.

Mr. Tarte found it necessary also to keep an eye on the provincial ministers. He writes the next day:

I have just telegraphed you not to adopt any order-in-council regarding the Manitoba schools until I return. I hope you will adopt my suggestion. It is in fact essential to the success of the work of conciliation which we have undertaken and which above everything calls for good faith. If the proposed amendments are put into effect in a spirit of

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friendship and good will, all will go well. If, on the contrary, they are enforced in a niggardly spirit, nothing good will come of them. I have met all the ministers, including Mr. Greenway, and they seem to me to realize the necessity of understanding and conciliatory action.

There is no reason why the Federal government should express satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Let the legislature adopt the proposed amendments; let them be put in force. If, as I have no doubt, the Catholics express themselves as satisfied, the last word will have been said. But it would be extremely imprudent to tie ourselves now, and thereby to give our adversaries in parliament ground for attack. Our rôle hitherto has been to act as *amici curiæ*. Let us stick to that. This is the position which I have taken with the Catholics here. I have promised them to continue our good offices in the application of the law. . . . Sifton will ask you for an order-in-council approving the settlement. Let him wait, telling him that it will not be advisable to do anything before my return. . . .

The settlement embodied three concessions. First, religious teaching was to be carried on between half-past three and four o'clock, by any Christian clergyman or his deputy, when authorized by a resolution of the local board of trustees or requested by the parents of ten children in a rural or twenty-five in an urban school. Different days or different rooms might be allotted different denominations; no children were to attend unless at the parents' desire. Secondly, at least one duly certificated Roman Catholic teacher was to be employed in urban schools, where the average attendance reached forty and in village and rural schools where it reached twenty-five, if required by parents' petition; similarly, non-Roman Catholic teachers were to be employed

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when requested by a non-Catholic minority. Thirdly, "when ten of the pupils in any school speak the French language or any language other than English, as their native language, the teaching of such pupils shall be conducted in French, or such other language, and English upon the bilingual system." The provincial government also agreed that fair Catholic representation in advisory council, inspectorships and examining boards would be kept in mind in the administration of the act. In essence, the agreement left the system of public schools intact, but secured for the minority distinct religious teaching, and, where numbers warranted, teachers of their own faith and the maintenance of the French tongue. The language clause was framed in general terms by the provincial authorities in order to make it apply to the German Mennonites as well as to the French Catholics.

The question at once arose,—how had the settlement been effected? Which side had given way? Had the Manitoba government played politics and made concessions to Wilfrid Laurier which it had refused to Mackenzie Bowell? Had the Laurier government accepted for the minority less than the Bowell government would have secured for them? The fact was that the terms, as was inevitable, were a compromise, but a compromise consistent with the essential principles of both parties to the negotiation. The Manitoba government was doubtless readier to negotiate with a Liberal than with a Conservative government, and with exponents of sunny ways than with the wielders of "big

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sticks." Yet it had adhered to its essential position, refusing to agree either to the restoration of a Catholic school system wholly separate and independent in organization, as the Remedial Bill had provided, or to the establishment, as the Dickey proposals involved, of a system within a system, the segregation of Catholic children, in towns and cities, in separate school buildings or rooms, for secular as well as religious purposes. This agreed, it had assented to all the other concessions for which the Dickey delegation had stood out, and which others now proposed. The Laurier government believed that the agreement was of more real value to the minority than any which could previously have been secured. The Remedial Bill would have been unworkable; the Dickey proposals in part were equally impracticable, while in important details they fell short of what was now secured. Definite religious teaching in the tenets of the Roman Catholic or any other faith was made possible in the only way compatible with unity in secular instruction, by optional instruction at the close of the day. The representation in practice, though not by statute, of Roman Catholics on administrative bodies, and an understanding as to text-books, were common ground. The provision for a Roman Catholic teacher was a modification of one of the Dickey proposals. The new agreement went beyond the Dickey proposals in providing that Roman Catholic children might in all cases be exempted from the standard religious exercises. It added the provision, arising, curiously enough, out of an amendment to the Remedial

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Bill moved by D'Alton McCarthy himself, for instruction in French.

The announcement of the settlement, on November 19, met very wide approval. Mr. Prendergast, in the interview to which Mr. Tarte refers, pointed out that fifty-one Catholic schools were closed, some since one, some since two, some since four years; that twenty-five others had come under the Public Schools Act, with its standardized religious instruction; and that of the thirty-two schools supported by private contributions as parish schools, half would have to be abandoned or turned into public schools within a year; the new agreement, while not all that could be desired, was worth a fair and honest trial; much would depend upon the spirit of its administration. The Anglican archbishop of Rupert's Land, an upholder of denominational teaching, agreed the settlement was the best that could be made. Dr. Bryce, Isaac Campbell, R. T. Riley and other leading Winnipeggers endorsed it. In Ontario, D'Alton McCarthy and E. F. Clarke spoke for the Conservative opponents of the Remedial Bill in approving it as a reasonable and satisfactory compromise: "Laurier has kept faith," Mr. Clarke declared. "La Patrie" welcomed the passing of evil days. From East to West the overwhelming opinion was approval of a settlement reasonably fair in itself and likely to ensure peace at last.

But approval was far from unanimous. As usual, extremes met. The Grand Orange Lodge of Manitoba denounced the settlement as a betrayal of the

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national schools, an insidious recognition of denominational pretensions. Senator Bernier and A. C. La-Rivière, leaders of the French-Canadian Conservatives of Manitoba, at a mass meeting in St. Boniface attacked it as a wholesale and disgraceful surrender of the minority's rights; no settlement could be accepted which had not previously been approved by the archbishop. Father Cherrier, of St. Boniface, declared that the Church was not content with half an hour for God. Archbishop Langevin sounded a call to arms: "I tell you there will be a revolt in Quebec which will ring throughout Canada and these men who to-day are triumphant will be cast down. The settlement is a farce. The fight has only begun." The next week he opened ten parish schools. In the far East, Archbishop O'Brien, whose flock enjoyed privileges much less extensive, attacked "the cynical injustice . . . of this feeble compact of unscrupulous expediency." In Quebec, Archbishop Begin, in a circular letter, declared:

No bishop wants nor can approve the so-called settlement of the Manitoba school question, which, in a word, is based upon the indefensible abandonment of the best established and most sacred rights of the Catholic minority. His Grace the Archbishop of St. Boniface has sounded an immediate and energetic protest against this agreement; in so doing he has done nothing but fulfil his duty as a shepherd and followed the directions of the Holy See. He could not but defend his flock.

"La Semaine Religieuse," the official organ of the

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Archbishop of Montreal, voiced the prevailing ecclesiastical opinion:

The Manitoba school question is not settled; it merely enters a new phase. . . . In Manitoba, Catholics and French-Canadians are not beggars nor strangers, to be content with crumbs. We will demand the Catholic school, school districts, books, teachers, and exemption from taxes. All constitutional and legal means of defence will be used before consenting to the rising generation being led into religious and national apostasy. There is no danger of His Eminence the Holy Father assenting: the signal for retreat will never come from Rome.

To one bishop of moderate views Mr. Laurier addressed a reasoned defence of the settlement:

(Translation)

30 November, 1896.

MONSEIGNEUR:

. . . Your Grace may perhaps tell me that these concessions do not go far enough. Was it possible to secure more? That is the first point to determine.

In the first place, I must meet the objection so often urged, that it is not a question of knowing whether it was possible to secure more: "the constitution as interpreted by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council declared that the Catholics had the right to the complete re-establishment of separate schools." I submit that on this point there is complete misunderstanding, and I believe this will be easy to demonstrate.

. . . The text of the judgment authorises merely an amendment to the existing law, and not the abrogation of that law. It is clear that separate schools could not have been re-established without as a preliminary repealing the Act of 1890, of which the express purpose was to put an end to the system of denominational schools. The text of the judgment states explicitly that in order to remedy the grievance of which

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Catholics complained it was not essential to give them back all the rights which had been taken away from them, but simply to add to the existing law provisions sufficient to protect the conscience of Catholics.

. . . But that is not all. Even supposing that the judgment of the Privy Council had declared that Catholics were entitled to the restoration of separate schools, was it possible to attain this result by a federal law? . . . Three things are indispensable in what is understood by separate schools: 1° exemption from public school taxes; 2° a distinct school organization; 3° a proportionate share in the appropriations voted by the legislature for education. These three conditions were found in the remedial order, but as your Grace knows, they were not found in the bill. The bill did not ensure a cent from the public grants for education. What was the reason for this retreat? Why after having declared in 1895 that separate were, like public schools, entitled to a grant from the provincial treasury, did the same government leave the separate schools which it pretended to re-establish without this grant? The reason given by Mr. Dickey, the Minister of Justice, was that there were very serious doubts as to the power of the federal parliament to appropriate the moneys of a provincial legislature. In other words, the Bowell government did not recognize this power as existing in the federal government.

Even assuminng that the government had this nominal power, I submit to your Grace that in the state of opinion, in face of the steadily growing feeling in favour of provincial autonomy, there is not now and there never will be any government strong enough to induce parliament to lay violent hands on the treasury of a province. . . .

. . . Now, to pretend to re-establish separate schools without a public grant, would be simply a fraud.

This being the situation, I submit to your Grace that the concessions offered by the government of Manitoba will be infinitely more effective than the so-called remedial bill could ever have been, if it had become law.

As amended, the Manitoba law will give, not separate schools

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in name—for that matter they were called public schools before 1890—but an equivalent which I believe acceptable. It will give us Catholic schools, taught by Catholic teachers, in all the districts where the number of Catholic pupils is forty in the city and twenty-five in the country, and these schools will be aided by the government like all other public schools. Further, the law as amended will provide Catholic teaching for Catholic pupils in schools where the teachers are not Catholics, at certain fixed hours.

So much for the amendments to the law. The questions of control and administration remain. I have undertaken to deal with them also, and have secured from the Manitoba government an undertaking to grant Catholics fair representation in the educational staff, the inspectors and the examining boards. With this representation, if good understanding and harmony are re-established, as I hope, and if the agreement which has been effected is carried out in the loyal and broad spirit which has been promised, the Catholics can easily reach a good understanding with the majority as to the qualification of teachers and the school curriculum.

I am ready to admit that the concessions made by the government of Manitoba do not include all that the Catholics looked for, but to seek to re-establish separate schools by federal intervention and to carry things through by main force, is a task which six years of agitation, of struggle, of bitterness, seem to me to have rendered impossible. Without dwelling on this point, I ask your Grace to consider the situation of the country, taking into account its races, its creeds, the inevitable passions, and the nobler sentiments which make provincial autonomy the foundation of our political system, and I believe that your Grace will come to the same conclusion as myself.

Religious teaching should be re-established in the schools. On this point, there is no doubt. I do not believe that it can be re-established by a federal law, and I am sure that it can be by mutual concessions, to which the provincial legislature will give its sanction.

Even admitting that it might be possible to obtain from

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the existing parliament, or from another to be elected by the people, a law completely restoring separate schools, which would be better, such a law administered by a hostile government, or a law less perfect, but passed by the provincial legislature itself, and administered by a government which, from being hostile, had become friendly?

The proverb, dictated by popular common sense, that the worst agreement is better than the best law-suit, may be applied with as much force to political as to private affairs. It seems to me on every ground that in this case more than ever conciliation will be more effective than compulsion.

I have presented to you briefly, Monseigneur, the considerations which, as it seems to me, determine this burning question.

My colleague, M. Tarte, with the same end in view has at my request visited his Grace of St. Boniface. His mission has not been successful.

. . . I do not ask your Grace to express satisfaction with the proposed arrangement. I simply ask you to consider whether it will not be better to give the arrangement a loyal trial.

I could not ask his Grace of St. Boniface to renounce the rights which he believes are guaranteed by the constitution, but there is ground for hoping that a trial of the new régime of conciliation will give him the most complete satisfaction, reserving the right to renew the struggle, to break the truce, if these hopes prove baseless.

I ask your Grace to consider that in our system of government there are two principles perpetually in antagonism—the principle of centralization and the principle of provincial autonomy. Do you not think, as I do, that the safety of Confederation, the interests particularly of the province of Quebec, lie in the firm maintenance of provincial autonomy? Not that federal intervention should never be exercised, but only as a last resort, when every other means has been exhausted, and when all hope of conciliation and of understanding with the provincial authorities has been found vain. . . .

Accept, Monseigneur, etc.

W. L.

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While some members of the episcopacy were convinced of the soundness of Mr. Laurier's contention, others continued to denounce him and all his works. The months that followed brought not calm, but rising storm. It was not surprising that to men of ultramontane views or uncompromising temper, the situation was not acceptable. Firmly persuaded of the right and duty of the Church to direct the political actions of Catholic voters and legislators, convinced that an intolerable wrong had been done their coreligionists in Manitoba and that the constitution provided a complete remedy, if only statesmen had the will to use it, surprised and angered by the disregard of their edicts shown by the electors of Quebec, they determined to use every means to reassert their authority and crush all opposition. A reign of ecclesiastical terror began, particularly in the archdiocese of Quebec, in the east of the province. Armand Tessier, editor of a Liberal journal, "Le Protecteur du Saguenay," was called to the episcopal palace of Chicoutimi, given his choice between making an abject apology for publishing articles questioning the right of the bishops to intervene in politics and having his newspaper put under the ban; he signed the apology. The leading Liberal journal of the province, "L'Electeur," of Quebec, still edited by the Ernest Pacaud of the Baie de Chaleurs episode, was not given this choice. Despite the fact that in earlier days, when Mercier was in his prime, Pacaud had received the blessing of the Pope to the third generation, "L'Electeur" was banned by bell,

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journal, "La Patrie," that Quebec was the Spain of America; the episcopal attack was the beginning of a struggle to the death between the hierarchy and the government; no compromise was possible, and if "L'Electeur" was too cowardly or too poor to continue the struggle others would do so for it: "We have had our victories of June 28, as our fathers had the victories of St. Denis, St. Charles, St. Eustache, in spite of the threats of the religious authorities. I fight not for myself but for poltroons who do not dare to raise their heads."

Laurier faced the crisis squarely. He would not submit, and he would not be led into a war against the Church. Once more, as twenty years earlier, he determined to uphold the right of Catholics to be at once free citizens and faithful sons of the Church. In parliament, before the public, and at Rome itself, this was the policy he and his colleagues had already pursued, and it was the policy they determined to continue.

In parliament there was surprisingly little discussion of the issue. The government urged its followers not to taunt the losers, and to give the parties concerned in the settlement an opportunity to work it out in quiet. On occasion, however, their position was made clear beyond question. Israel Tarte put it with his usual frankness and lucidity in a debate in March, 1897:

Some of our honourable friends opposite do not seem to realize the currents of public opinion. The days are gone by when the people of Quebec could be deceived and treated as my honourable friends opposite would wish them to be

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treated. I say that more progress in the ideas of liberty and freedom has been made in the province of Quebec in the past ten years than in any other province of the Dominion. When I started out from my parents' farm I entertained then and entertained later many of the doctrines now held by many of my Roman Catholic friends in the clergy, and it is on that account I forgive them many things. Sir, the Roman Catholic clergy of the province of Quebec is composed of good men, of moral men, there is not a more moral body of men than the priests of the province of Quebec, but I am bound to add at the same time that those men have been brought up, as it were, within closed walls, and some of them have become the unwilling tools of such men as those who sit on the opposite side of the House.

The Conservatives were quite as reluctant to make the settlement a party issue. The Conservative survivors from Quebec still demanded "justice, not a sham," and taunted the Liberal members who had signed the bishops' pledge, but the Conservatives from other provinces washed their hands of the whole question. The bishops had not delivered the goods in the last election; why worry further? Sir Charles Tupper frankly refused to pull any more episcopal chestnuts out of the fire; while denying that he had made any compact with the bishops of Quebec, he admitted he had naturally expected more support than he had received:

I am free to confess that I entirely overrated the importance of this question. . . . I find there has not been that deep importance attached to this question by a very large part of that denomination that I had previously supposed. I make this admission frankly to the House, and I cannot but feel that it is not unlikely that it will be much more difficult in the future than it was in the past . . . to induce gentlemen

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to sacrifice their own judgment to some extent, and the feelings of their constituents to some extent, to maintain a policy which when subjected to the test of actual experience, is not found to have the importance attached to it that was previously supposed. . . . I am glad to know that the responsibility rests no longer on my shoulders, but upon those of the gentleman who is now the First Minister of the Crown.

In Quebec, the Liberals stood to their guns. They pressed to a successful conclusion their protest against the election of Dr. Marcotte in Champlain, on the ground of undue influence of curés who had declared it a mortal sin to vote for a Liberal. When in a by-election in Bonaventure in March, 1897, Mgr. Blais asked both candidates to sign a pledge to vote in the House against the Laurier-Greenway settlement or any other settlement not approved by the bishops, and to forbid their fellow-campaigners "to speak one single word in favour of the Laurier-Greenway settlement or of giving it a trial," the Conservative candidate agreed, but the Liberal candidate, Mr. J. F. Guite, flatly refused: he would like to see still better terms for his compatriots, but must use his own judgment as to the best means: "I am a Catholic, and in all questions of faith and morals I am ready to accept without restriction the decisions of the Church. In all political questions I claim the freedom enjoyed by every British subject. . . . I cannot before God and my conscience renounce the freedom of exercising my privilege as a member, to the best of my judgment." He was elected by double the previous Liberal majority,—though possibly the prospect of government railway extension

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through the country had some influence on the result.

At the height of the crisis Mr. Laurier made his own position clear. At a banquet held by the Club National in Montreal, on December 30, a few days after "L'Electeur" had been banned, he defended the school settlement as the best practicable solution, and then, in terms which revealed the strain and tension of the hour, referred to the clerical crusade:

I have devoted my career to the realization of an idea. I have taken the work of Confederation where I found it when I entered political life, and determined to give it my life. Nothing will deter me from continuing to the end in my task of preserving at all cost our civil liberty. Nothing will prevent me from continuing my efforts to preserve that state of society conquered by our fathers at the price of so many years and so much blood. It may be that the result of my efforts will be the Tarpeian Rock, but if that be the case, I will fall without murmur or recrimination or complaint, certain that from my tomb will rise the immortal idea for which I have always fought. . . .

It is to you, my young friends, that I particularly address myself. You are at the outset of your career. Let me give you a word of good counsel. During your career you will have to suffer many things which will appear to you as supreme injustice. Let me say to you that you should never allow your religious convictions to be affected by the acts of men. Your convictions are immortal. Their foundation is eternal. Let your convictions be always calm, serene and superior to the inevitable trials of life. Show to the world that Catholicism is compatible with the exercise of liberty in its highest acceptation; show that the Catholics of the country will render to God what is God's, to Cæsar what is Cæsar's.

While defending himself resolutely from attack,

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Laurier was strongly opposed to any counter campaign. He wanted no anti-clerical movement of the European model. With some difficulty he restrained the ardour of Mr. Beaugrand and his fellow-stalwarts, some of whom were in close touch with affairs on the Continent and were quite ready to follow Continental Liberalism in its attitude to the Church. In 1897, as in 1877, Wilfrid Laurier interpreted Liberalism otherwise. In a letter to Mr. Beaugrand he refers to the difficulties he met in making his policy prevail:

Wilfrid Laurier to H. Beaugrand.—(Translation)

Ottawa, February 8, 1897.

MY DEAR BEAUGRAND:

. . . Let me say how much I thank you for all you say in your letter. I cannot adequately express to you how deeply I was touched by the interview I had with you. Between such friends as we are, there cannot be a break, though there may be differences. I am a Liberal, like yourself, but we do not belong to the same school. I am a disciple of Lacordaire. I regret that on one or two occasions I expressed my disagreement with you in terms much too strong. Now that we have frankly threshed the matter out, our old friendship will only be the better for it.

I am pleased to see that the sale of "La Patrie" has gone off well,¹ and that, now that you are freed of the press of business you are going to be able to give your health all the attention that it requires. . . .

But it was not enough to take this stand before his countrymen. It had become essential to take it in Rome as well. It was necessary to appeal from those who spoke in the name of Rome to Rome itself, to ask

¹ To a group of Liberals, with Mr. Tarte's sons in charge.



Sir Oliver Mowat



Sir Richard Cartwright



Sir William Mulock



William S. Fielding



Andrew G. Blair



Henri Joly de Lotbinière



Israel Tarte



William Paterson



Sir Louis Davies

GROUP OF MINISTERS



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the head of their church whether Catholicism involved a loss of political independence, to avert by timely information action from Rome supporting the aggressive bishops in their stand. A steady stream of ecclesiastical visitors from Canada had presented at Rome their side of the case; the laity had not been heard. Immediately after the general elections, therefore, a group of Quebec Liberals determined to state their case. Abbé Proulx of St. Lin des Laurentides, who had supported the Liberals on the school issue, and Chevalier Drolet, who had been a member of the crusader band of Zouaves who had rallied to the defence of the papacy nearly thirty years before, were despatched to Rome. A semi-private letter from Mr. Laurier to M. L'Abbe Proulx provided his credentials:

(Translation)

Ottawa, 9 September, 1896.

MY DEAR M. PROULX:

The attitude taken during the recent elections by Mgr. Laffèche and some other members of the episcopate, was, in my opinion, a great mistake. It seems to me certain that this violent intervention of the ecclesiastical authorities in the electoral arena cannot but have harmful consequences for the position that Catholics hold in the Confederation, and that it is equally likely to trouble the consciences of the faithful.

It may seem unseemly on my part to speak thus. I persist, however, in believing that the attitude which my political friends and I have taken in the question which was then submitted to the electors was much more in conformity with the ideas frequently expressed by his Holiness Leo XIII than the attitude of Mgr. Laffèche and of those who acted with him.

It is not, I think, presumptuous to believe that if the

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question is submitted to the pontifical authorities at Rome, we may expect a statement of doctrine which would have the effect of bringing regrettable abuses to an end, maintaining peace and harmony in our country and reassuring the consciences of Catholics.

As you are about to sail for Rome, you will render a great service to the Catholics of this country who unfortunately have incurred the disfavour of certain members of the episcopate, because of their political opinions and for no other reason, if you would state their case and represent to the pontifical authorities that all they seek in this country is to exercise their duties as citizens in accord with the recognized principles of the British Constitution, principles recognized equally by his Holiness Leo XIII.

In a more personal letter of the same date Mr. Laurier gave further suggestions for guidance:

(Translation)

I am sending you herewith a private letter not intended for publicity, but which may however be shown as a credential. Mr. Drolet will leave shortly for Rome. My colleagues in the House of Commons are sending him as their advocate and interpreter to state their case officially before the pontifical authorities. I would like you to keep in touch with him, in order to inform him as to all useful steps that should be taken to attain the end in view.

In a short time I shall send you a memorandum relative to the settlement of the school question, but the first thing to do is to make the pontifical authorities understand that we are Catholics and that we wish to remain Catholics but that in a constitutional country such as ours the attitude taken by Mgr. Laffêche and certain other members of the episcopate, if approved at Rome, would place us in a position of inferiority such that a Catholic could never become prime minister nor even form part of a government like the Canadian, in which

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Protestants are necessarily in a majority, since the Protestants are in a majority in the country.

I must repeat to you also what I have said already, that while disapproving the conduct of members of the episcopacy, to which I have just referred, it is not the intention of any of us to expose them to the slightest humiliation. If you consider it advisable that a delegate should be appointed for Canada, you will please inform me. I need not say to you that the selection of such a delegate would be of very great importance.

Accept my best wishes for your voyage.

The two envoys made their way to Rome, finding "half ecclesiastical Canada there before us or on the way." In Rome, progress was slow. The affairs of all the ends of the earth met there; rules of etiquette and audience were stiff; there were so many personages to see. "The impossibility of making rapid progress," writes Mr. Drolet, "often the necessity of making no progress at all, with the Congregations, with this Black monde, jealous, oh so jealous, meddling, old, old above all." In moments of despair he was prepared to believe Zola's "Rome" not wholly false. It was not easy to convince Rome that Bishops were in error and laymen right. The bishops had long had the ear of Cardinal and Congregation. Had not the Queen in Council commanded that separate schools be restored? Had not Protestant Tupper tried to restore them and had not Catholic Laurier resisted? Was not this Laurier a bad Catholic, a Free Mason?¹ And perhaps the

¹ Replying to a letter of Mr. Drolet, recounting on unimpeachable authority a statement to this effect made in high places by one of the Canadian

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good Mr. Drolet was not the most tactful of envoys, unduly suspicious and belligerent, laying emphasis on his long dossier containing two hundred charges of intimidation against this bishop and that curé, rather than on the danger of the recoil to the Church itself. "The old gentleman is rather a light weight," wrote a critic, "a kind of Monsieur Tartaran, who got on the wrong track from the first and among the wrong set."

bishops then in Rome, Mr. Laurier made this unusually full confession of faith:

"Ottawa, 15 December, 1896.

"... The settlement which we have obtained from the government of Manitoba satisfies every sensible man in Canada, but the clergy of the province of Quebec will not pardon us for what it calls their check of last summer. They want revenge at all costs, and unless the Holy See intervenes in time, we are threatened with a religious war whose consequences alarm me. But we cannot draw back. Certain members of the clergy are blind: if their way of thinking is to prevail, not only will we have a war of religion, but thousands upon thousands of good Catholics will be brought to hold religion responsible for the faults and excesses of its ministers. That must be avoided at all costs. . . .

"I have read with regret the remarks which Mgr. N. made about me, in the Vatican itself. I am astonished, even though I have come to expect all manner of attacks. However, I would never have believed there was so much malice in the heart of a certain set. My dear Drolet, you have known me for well on to forty years; you know that I have never paraded my religious convictions, but that they exist; I can appreciate to-day how much influence they have over me, when I say that they have not been shaken by the attacks of those whose mission it is to preach Christian charity.

"Whatever comes. 'il faut marcher droit son chemin.' That was your old Pontifical Zouave motto; it is mine to-day. We must keep the straight road. I see clearly and distinctly the goal. I do not know whether we can reach it, but I am full of hope and courage.

"It is a singular thing, that these violent acts, this ignorance of conditions in our own country, this war to which we are going to be exposed, far from estranging me from the Church, draws me closer to it. I feel how superior religion is to all that often is done in the name of religion.

"W. L."

It is conceivable that, knowing the chevalier's impulsive diplomancy, Mr. Laurier was not altogether surprised to hear that he had read this letter to all the high ecclesiastical authorities he met,—one of whom declared in ecstasy, "Why, your Mr. Laurier is the only Christian in Canada!"

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He fared somewhat better when he turned from Cardinal Ledochowski, head of the Propaganda, and thus the champion of the bishops under his charge, to the Secretary of State, Cardinal Rampolla.

Whatever the reason, progress was slow. It became necessary to take more direct and more effective steps. It was decided to make a formal and collective statement of the case, to send other representatives to Rome, and to press for the appointment of an apostolic delegate. These conclusions were not reached without debate. Tarte opposed Laurier's suggestion of a joint petition to his Holiness, as likely to be twisted or misconstrued by Protestants, but when Laurier made it clear that it was not the political question, not the settlement of the school issue, but the conflict within the Catholic Church in Canada that the Pope was to be asked to consider, he became an ardent supporter of the plan. Forty-five members of the Commons and the Senate, Wilfrid Laurier's name leading, signed a petition and protest.¹ There was also some question as

1^{TO HIS HOLINESS LEO XIII:}

"Most Holy Father,—We, the undersigned, members of the Senate and members of the House of Commons of Canada, and representing therein the Liberal party, present ourselves before your Holiness as respectful and devoted children of Holy Church, to complain of the existence of a state of things which, if allowed to continue, might be extremely dangerous to the constitutional liberties of this country, as well as to the interests of the Church itself.

"Your Holiness has already been made aware of the conduct and attitude of certain prelates and of certain members of the secular clergy who, during the general elections in this country; in the month of June last, intervened in a violent manner in restraint of electoral freedom, taking sides openly for the Conservative party against the Liberal party, and going so far as to declare guilty of grievous sin those of the electors who would vote for the candidates of the Liberal party.

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"Sincerely attached to the institutions of our country, which insure to us Catholics the most complete liberty, we respectfully represent to your Holiness that these democratic institutions under which we live and for which your Holiness has many times expressed sentiments of admiration and confidence, can only exist under perfect electoral freedom.

"Far be it from us to refuse to the clergy the plenitude of civil and political rights. The priest is a citizen, and we would not, for a single instant, deprive him of the right of expressing his opinion on any matter submitted to the electorate; but when the exercise of that right develops into violence, and when that violence, in the name of religion, goes to the extent of making a grievous sin out of a purely political act, there is an abuse of authority of which the consequences cannot but be fatal, not only to constitutional liberty, but to religion itself.

"If, in a country such as ours, with a population consisting of persons of various creeds and wherein the Protestant denominations are in the majority, Catholics did not enjoy, in all matters relating to legislation, the same political freedom as their Protestant fellow-countrymen, they would *ipso facto* be placed in a position of inferiority, which would prevent them from taking the legitimate part which they are entitled to take in the government of the country, with the possibility, moreover, of conflicts between the various groups of the population which history shows to be very fraught with danger.

"Then again, an active and violent intervention of the clergy in the domain of political questions submitted to the people must, of necessity, produce against the great mass of the Catholic population a degree of irritation manifestly prejudicial to that respect which religion and its ministers should ever inspire and command.

"Some twenty years ago, his Holiness Pius the IX, your illustrious and lamented predecessor on the Pontifical Throne, acting through the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, deemed it his duty to put a stop to certain abuses of a similar character, and forbade the intervention of the clergy in politics. This prohibition was generally respected so long as his Eminence Cardinal Taschereau was able to guide the Church in Canada, but since old age and infirmities have paralyzed his guiding hand, the abuses to which your illustrious predecessor had put a stop, have begun again, and threaten once more to create trouble among us and to compromise, not only Catholic interests in this country, but the peace and harmony which should exist between the various elements of our population.

"Again affirming our absolute devotion to the faith of our fathers and to the Church of which you are the Supreme Head; affirming our respect and attachment for the person of your Holiness, our attachment to the interests of our country and to the Crown of Great Britain, its ægis and protector, we beg that your Holiness will renew in our behalf the most wise prescriptions and prohibitions of your predecessor; protect the consciences of the Catholic electors, and thus secure peace in our country by the union of religion and liberty,—a union which your Holiness has many times extolled in those immortal encyclicals whose precious teachings we desire in all things to follow; and, lastly, grant to the children of the Church, now addressing your Holiness, the Apostolic Benediction.

"Ottawa, October, 1896."

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to the coming of a papal legate. True, the visit of Cardinal Satolli to the United States in 1892, and the visit of Mgr. Conroy to Canada in 1876 had brought peace and liberty, but much depended on the man. An Ontario bishop foresaw Protestant denunciations of Papal interference, and feared "that a delegate sent from Rome or France who, being prepossessed, as all Continental ecclesiastics are, with the idea that Liberalism in politics is synonymous with infidelity, could not grasp the idea that Liberalism here bore no relation to what is known by that name on the Continent." Yet the risk seemed worth running. The new envoys were Charles Fitzpatrick and Charles Russell, son of Lord Russell of Killowen, whose family spent the winters in Rome. Fortified by a strong statement from Edward Blake, counsel for the minority, that the Judicial Committee could not, and did not, command the restoration of the schools as they were before 1890, and that the terms of the Laurier-Greenway settlement were more advantageous to the Catholic minority than any remedial bill which it was in the power of the parliament of Canada to force on the province of Manitoba, and with letters from Cardinal Vaughan and the Duke of Norfolk, the envoys went to Rome. At once progress was rapid. Mr. Russell's wit and knowledge of Anglo-Roman politics opened many doors. Mr. Fitzpatrick's piety was "the wonder and the awe of Rome." With the Secretary of State, Cardinal Rampolla, with all the other cardinals who were likely to be consulted, Cardinals Vannutelli, Vicenti, Jacobini, Ferratta,

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Ledochowski, Gotti, and Mazella,—of whom only Mgr. Ledochowski refused a fair hearing, all the others impressing the visitors as “men of strong intelligence and judgment who were anxious to learn the truth,”—with Mgr. Merry del Val, the Pope’s companion and attendant, and finally in an audience with His Holiness himself, the case was urged. It was necessary to make it clear not merely that the judgment of the Privy Council had no mandatory effect, but that Canada was not, as seemed to be assumed in Rome, a predominantly Catholic country, and that not all the bishops, but only six out of twenty-nine had committed themselves to the war against the Liberal party. The promise to make full inquiry through a special commission of cardinals was readily given. The appointment of an apostolic delegate, Mgr. Merry del Val, followed a few weeks later.

Mgr. Raphael Merry del Val was then only thirty-two, but he had already made his mark in Europe. In the household of his father, a Spanish nobleman of Irish descent who was ambassador in turn to London, to Brussels and to Rome; in schools in England and in Brussels; in the Papal Court, where he soon became confidential chamberlain, Mgr. Merry del Val proved his ability and his judgment. His striking presence,—“the most truly prince-like man, I ever met,” Mr. Laurier afterward termed him,—his searching but kindly eye, his polished but somewhat reserved address, his mastery of European tongues, his shrewdness, thoroughness, and, above all, the complete confidence

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he inspired, made him a diplomat predestined to success. He arrived in Canada late in March; in the next few months he met the bishops and many of the clergy of Quebec and Ontario, and leading Catholic and Protestant laymen. It did not take long for him to realize how dangerous a policy Mgr. Laflèche and his friends had been pursuing. Archbishop Walsh and the majority of the Ontario bishops strongly confirmed his reading of the situation. Not least, the instant friendship and confidence which developed between Mgr. Merry del Val and Mr. Laurier contributed to a firm understanding. He issued no mandement, made no public rebuke, but gradually agitation ceased, and Mgr. Merry del Val returned to Rome.

After hearing the apostolic delegate's report, and after consulting further with members of the Canadian episcopacy, including the new Archbishop of Montreal, Mgr. Paul Bruchesi, the Pope issued an encyclical, given at Rome on December 8, 1897, and read in Canadian pulpits a month later. The encyclical noted with regret the obstacles which had been placed in the way of the Church's efforts in a country which owed to it the first glimpse of Christianity and civilization, and emphasized the importance of morals in education, and the necessity of grounding morals in religion. The bishops had therefore been right in protesting against the Manitoba law, which struck a blow at Catholic education; the laity should have sunk differences of party and stood united for justice. True, something had recently been done to alleviate the grievances; no

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doubt these efforts had been inspired by laudable intentions and a love of equity, but the fact remained that "the law which has been enacted for the purpose of reparation is defective, imperfect, insufficient." The concessions stopped far short of justice; they might not be carried out effectively, when local circumstances changed. Complete justice must be sought. However, there was room for difference of opinion as to the best tactics to follow; "let no one therefore lose sight of the rules of moderation, of meekness and of brotherly charity." Meanwhile, "until it shall be granted them to obtain the full triumph of all their claims, let them not refuse partial satisfaction. Wherever the law or the situation or the friendly disposition of individuals offer them some means of lessening the evil, and of better averting its dangers, it is altogether becoming and useful that they make use of these means and draw from them the utmost possible advantage." The greatest care should be taken to improve the quality of teachers and the scope of the work of the schools; the Catholic schools should rival the most flourishing in methods and efficiency: "from the standpoint of intellectual culture and the progress of civilization there is nothing but what is great and noble in the plan conceived by the Canadian provinces of developing public instruction, of raising its standards constantly, and making it something higher and ever more perfect; there is no kind of study, no advance in human knowledge, which cannot be made to harmonize with Catholic doctrine."

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In this moderate and enlightened utterance, both sections of opinion within the Church in Canada found ground for satisfaction, but the general effect was distinctly in support of the moderates' position. The Laurier-Greenway settlement had been pronounced imperfect and inadequate as a final settlement, but its acceptance as an instalment of justice had been commended, moderation and a recognition of the goodwill of its framers enjoined, and emphasis laid on the quality of instruction to be given in the schools. Nothing further could have been expected in a public statement, and Mr. Laurier and his Quebec friends had not desired more. The school question was by no means yet ended, but the ecclesiastical war was halted, and the political tension eased. Once again, as a score of years before, the firmness and moderation of Wilfrid Laurier and the Catholic Liberals of Quebec, and the sagacity and fairness of the highest authorities in the Church, had averted a struggle which would have involved both Church and country in difficulty and disaster.

The failure of the crusade was made evident when in the spring of 1897, the time came for the provincial elections in Quebec. The Conservative government of Hon. E. J. Flynn, who had become premier when Mr. Taillon had entered the Tupper administration, absolutely declined to make the school question an issue in the local contest. The prestige of Laurier's name and the rout of the Conservatives in the federal contest gave an overwhelming victory to the Liberal leader,

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Felix Gabriel Marchand, a man lacking the oratorical gifts and the personal magnetism of many of his predecessors but shrewd and solid, trusted of all men, and firmly progressive in his policies. When, however, Mr. Marchand endeavoured to put educational reform in the forefront of his legislative programme, and to reverse the policy adopted twenty years before, which had taken control of the schools from a government department and entrusted it wholly to denominational committees, Catholic and Protestant, he found himself blocked. The truce was held to bind both parties. The Archbishop of Montreal, Mgr. Paul Bruchesi, who kept in close touch with Wilfrid Laurier, soon proved that sunny ways and personal pressure would go further than the storms and the thunderbolts of the doughty old warrior of Three Rivers.

The settlement of the Manitoba school controversy made it possible to concentrate attention upon policies of economic development. For years the country had marked time. The depression which had set in with the "nineties" had not yet passed. The prices of farm products were low, farms hard to sell and burdened with mortgages. Railways, banks, wholesale houses, retailers had to scratch hard for custom. Factories stimulated by the N. P. found the home market too small and sought remedy in combines and selling agreements. Foreign trade advanced slowly and uncertainly. Few immigrants came and fewer remained; the exodus of the native-born to the United States bled the

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country white. Homestead entries in the West had fallen to four thousand a year in the early "nineties," and to eighteen hundred in 1896; in that year only five hundred and seventy Canadians had sufficient faith in their own country to seek a Western homestead. West of Lake Superior there were only some three hundred thousand people, one-third of them Indians. "The trails from Manitoba to the States," declared a Western Conservative newspaper, "were worn bare and brown by the wagon wheels of departing settlers."

The causes of this economic stagnation were not wholly Canadian. World-wide factors had played a part. World peace and rapid railway-building had opened vast areas of new lands to settlement,—the western United States, Argentina, Australia, Russia,—and had flung their products on a falling market. Canada's severe and testing climate, exaggerated in foreign repute, and perhaps her subordinate colonial status, had played a part in deterring settlers. But there were other causes more readily removed: a protective tariff which sought to isolate and make self-sufficient a population too sparse and scattered for the experiment; racial and religious bickerings (for which both parties had a share of responsibility) draining and distracting energy; and a government weak and divided in cabinet council and permeated with dry-rot in the general administration.

The turn of the tide after 1896 was of course not due solely to the change of government. World-wide forces played a part in revival as in depression. The

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filling up of other new lands, the growth of urban as against rural population, the rapid increase in the world's gold supply, raised prices of all goods and particularly of farm products. Within Canada, again, forces beyond the government's control made for betterment. Most notable were the development of the gold-copper and silver-lead ores of Southern British Columbia (the prospector, it is true, being helped by the building of the Canadian Pacific), and particularly the discovery of fabulously rich placer-mines in the Klondike in 1896 and the stampede from all corners of the world which followed in 1897 and 1898. Perhaps less wealth was taken out of the ground than was put in, but these discoveries at least primed the pump of prosperity, and arrested the world's attention long enough to make evident the more enduring wealth that lay beyond.

Yet the new government were not merely "flies on the wheel," as Sir Richard Cartwright had once rashly rated the Mackenzie cabinet during the depression of the seventies. They had confidence in Canada and in themselves, energy, constructive vision. The policies they developed in the next few years were real and indispensable factors in the new prosperity. They did not create the opportunity; they did seize it when it offered. The immigration policy, the land policy, the railway policy, the tariff and fiscal policy of the Laurier administration were essential elements in making Canada what Mr. Laurier was soon to term it, in a quota-

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tion now as hackneyed as "Hamlet,"—"the country of the twentieth century."

The land and immigration policy of the administration was developed by its youngest and sole Western member, Clifford Sifton. He had entered the government as Minister of the Interior, in November, 1896, as soon as agreement had been reached between Ottawa and Winnipeg on the school question, securing election for Brandon by acclamation. He knew the West; he was ambitious for himself and for his country; his shrewd insight, his administrative capacity, his power of quick decision, were qualities rare at Ottawa. In dealing with the public lands of the prairie provinces, the chief action taken was to end at once, as Liberal policy had long demanded, the lavish grants of land to railways. Before 1896 some fifty-six million acres had been voted and some thirty-two million acres earned as railway subsidy; after 1896, not an acre was voted. Homestead regulations were eased and simplified. Then a campaign for settlers began, unparalleled in Canada or elsewhere. From Continental Europe the Doukhobor and the Ruthenian were brought or welcomed, filling Western wastes but creating difficult problems of social or national harmony. From the United States came the immigrants most immediately helpful in themselves, farmers as most were, with no little capital, skilled in the ways of Western land, and most effective in advertising to the rest of the world the fact that Canada had now more to offer the settler than

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any other country. Advertisements in six thousand weekly newspapers in the United States, agents and sub-agents stationed in every likely centre, exhibits at autumn fairs and free excursions for pressmen and farmer delegates, ready aid in land-seeking and home-shifting, soon set going a migration that rejoiced Canada, puzzled the States and aroused Europe. From seven hundred in 1897 the settlers from the South rose to fifteen thousand in 1900,—and one hundred thousand in 1911. Then Mr. Sifton turned to the United Kingdom, the schools, the press, the patriots who wanted Britons kept within the Empire; the British tide mounted more slowly, but soon surpassed the Continental and American movements,—thirty thousand in 1904, a hundred and twenty thousand in 1911. The exodus to the more dazzling city opportunities of the United States, the return to Europe of the men who had not found gold lying in the streets of their New Jerusalem, continued, but were far outbalanced by the incoming tide. Homestead entries leaped to seven thousand eight hundred by 1900, twenty-two thousand by 1902, and forty-one thousand by 1906.

In Canada, it had become accepted doctrine that the State should not merely aid settlement, but should aid in developing the means of communication. No great new railway was built in these early years; the country was still growing up to the Canadian Pacific. Three minor and supplementary projects were given aid. In the East the government, in 1897, sought to extend the Intercolonial, by lease and purchase, from the wayside

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village of Pointe Levi to the natural terminus at Montreal; the details of Mr. Blair's plan were open to criticism, but some such policy was an obvious business necessity. In the West, the discovery of coal, copper, gold, silver, and lead in southern British Columbia and Alberta, called for railway service, and none the less so when "Jim" Hill thrust a spur of the Great Northern up into the boundary country. General opinion favoured an independent road, but in 1897 the government concluded the most feasible policy was to seek an extension of the Canadian Pacific. A subsidy of eleven thousand dollars a mile was voted to its Crow's Nest Pass branch, from Lethbridge to Nelson; in return, freight rates on the main line were cut substantially, and one-fifth of the coal lands granted improvidently by the British Columbia government were transferred to the Dominion. Western hostility to the Canadian Pacific, Eastern suspicion of Toronto capitalists interested alike in Crow's Nest coal and in the Toronto "Globe," the foremost advocate of extension, led to wide criticism, but the bargain was carried through. A third project, brought forward in 1898 for the building of a railway from the Stikine River to Teslin Lake, and thus giving access to the Klondike through Canadian territory instead of through the Alaskan panhandle, involved a grant of twenty-five thousand acres of Yukon lands per mile to the enterprising contracting firm of Mackenzie and Mann, now first coming into public fame. In the light of Eldorado visions, the land grant seemed extravagant, and the Senate felt sufficient public backing to

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throw out the government's measure. The completion of the St. Lawrence canal system to a fourteen-foot level was less controversial, and the abolition of all canal tolls was welcomed on all sides, not least in the Maritime provinces where it furnished a precedent for demands for low rates on government railways. The Post-Office Department, hitherto inefficient and a source of large deficits, was transformed under the management of William Mulock, one of the strongest administrators in the cabinet; a great improvement in service and a reduction of postal rates by one-third were justified by increased business and steadily rising surpluses.

As regards state aid to production, little had been done directly for the fisherman, the lumberman or the miner. Fishing-grounds had been conserved by close seasons, restocking, protection against outside poachers; now, instruction in curing and packing, and later cold-storage and fast-shipping facilities were added. The lumberman and the miner had shared the benefits of railway facilities and the two-edged gift of tariff protection; now fresh efforts were made to open foreign markets and to lessen tariff burdens on mine and mill machinery. The farmer had been aided by experimental farms; now, under Sydney Fisher's direction, the work of experiment and instruction was greatly widened, and, with the co-operation of the Saunders, James Robertson and J. A. Ruddick, the Eastern farmer was aided in that shift from wheat and barley to cheese and bacon which has transformed Canadian agriculture.

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One great field of state aid to production remained, and that the most controversial. The use of the tariff to stimulate and protect industry, particularly manufacturing, had been the most distinctive of Conservative policies for nearly twenty years. What was the Liberal policy to be? In the Ottawa convention in 1893, in repeated speeches, notably during Mr. Laurier's Western tour in 1894, and in open letters exchanged on the eve of the general election between Mr. Laurier and a Toronto manufacturer, George H. Bertram,—a grandson of his old friend of New Glasgow days, John Murray,—the policy of the Liberals had been declared. They denounced protection, urged the reduction of the tariff to bear lightly on the necessities of life and "to promote freer trade with the whole world, particularly with Great Britain and the United States," reiterated the demand for "a fair and liberal reciprocity treaty with the United States," and set as their goal "a tariff for revenue only." There was a distinct revival of low-tariff sentiment in the "nineties," following the failure of protection to protect, and on this current even an "incidental protectionist" like Mr. Laurier was once swept on to prophesy that "free trade as they have it in England" would be Canada's ultimate goal, while Mr. Davies denounced protection as bondage, robbery, a system accursed of God and man. Yet Mr. Laurier made it plain, particularly in the Bertram correspondence, that change must be gradual; there would be no tariff revolution; one advantage of a tariff primarily for revenue, would be its stability.

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The first step of the new administration created confidence. Instead of meeting protected manufacturers secretly in "Red Parlours," the government appointed a committee—Sir Richard Cartwright, Mr. Fielding, and Mr. Paterson—to hear in public all who had views to present. Sitzings were held in the leading centres; not many others but manufacturers gave evidence but their demands were made in the open.

Mr. Fielding brought down his first budget in April, 1897, in a speech which revealed his power of lucid statement and readiness in debate. It was a modest budget, as budgets go nowadays. In the first twenty years of Confederation, the ordinary expenditure had grown threefold, from the original thirteen millions, and then for ten years had stood stationary. Mr. Fielding forecast for 1897-98 an ordinary expenditure of \$39,000,000, and a total outlay of \$45,000,000.¹ To raise this amount, it was still customary to rely almost wholly on tariff and excise duties. Mr. Fielding stiffened the excise duties on spirits and tobacco, but the main interest lay in the customs changes. The tariff revision was substantial and comprehensive. Important additions were made to the free list, notably corn, fence wire, binder twine, cream separators, mining machinery; reductions were made in sugar, flour, farm implements, and coal-oil. The schedules were simplified and specific duties largely changed to ad valorem. Power was taken to abolish duties on goods

¹ In 1910-11, the last year under Mr. Fielding's direction, the ordinary expenditure was \$38,000,000 and the total \$123,000,000; in 1920-21, the ordinary expenditure was \$362,000,000 and the total, \$533,000,000.

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produced by trusts or combines. The duties on iron and steel were lowered, but in compensation the bounties on pig-iron, puddled iron bars and steel billets were increased, and made to apply to iron manufactured in Canada from foreign ore. Most important, the principle of a maximum and minimum tariff, with special reference to Great Britain, was introduced.

The first Fielding budget was a masterly achievement. It was a careful and informed endeavour to harmonize and reduce the tariff. It was not wholly consistent: the increase of the iron and steel bounties and the retention of the duty on coal, in face of Mr. Laurier's declaration after the election that raw materials such as coal and iron would be free, revealed the pressure of Nova Scotia interests. It left the tariff still protectionist; and while Sir Charles Tupper declared that the tariff would ruin and paralyze the industries of the country, and the columns of the Montreal "Gazette" were filled with announcements from manufacturers that their mills would be forced to close, Mr. Foster insisted that "the Liberal party has embalmed the principle of protection in the tariff" and that "there is to-day, in this parliament, as between the two sides, practically no difference upon the expediency of the principle of protection as the guiding principle of our fiscal system." John Ross Robertson, a sturdy independent Conservative who had broken from his party on the school question, but was a confirmed protectionist, gave a middle view when he declared that while the Liberals might be considered half-seas-over on the

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way to protection, he feared their gradual attack as the most dangerous strategy and could not fully trust them even if they did steal the Opposition's clothes: "the Opposition is the mother of protection and loves the policy for its own sake; the government is a sort of nurse that takes protection and suckles it in order to earn a living for its party." Yet the weight of contemporary opinion and later experience have stamped the Fielding tariff as a sound and moderate revision.

As a first practical step toward freer trade it could not well have been bettered. Unfortunately, it was also, save for extensions of the British preference, and the attempt in 1911 to secure reciprocity with the United States, to be a last step.

The feature of the new budget which had most political importance and popular appeal was the adoption of a minimum and maximum tariff, with the purpose of restricting the minimum tariff mainly to British wares. Imperialists seeking a counter-cry to unrestricted reciprocity, Conservatives trying to reconcile protection with imperialism, had urged reciprocal tariff preference between Great Britain and the colonies, but so long as Britain cleaved to free trade, any such proposals were an idle dream. In 1892, the Liberal party had unanimously voted for a resolution moved by Louis Davies, demanding that as Britain already admitted Canadian products duty-free, Canada should reduce her duties on goods mainly imported from Britain. D'Alton McCarthy and his Equal Rights League had urged a minimum and maximum tariff, the minimum

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rates for Britain, the British colonies and other countries prepared to give fair terms. But any policy of tariff discrimination was barred by the existence of British treaties binding on Canada and conferring on foreign countries rights to equal treatment. These treaties were survivals from colonialism. In early days Britain had made colonial tariffs and bound the colonies by her treaties. Slowly the larger colonies, with Canada leading, had been emerging from this subordinate status. Galt and Macdonald had made it clear that Canada could and would make her own tariffs. In treaty-making, negative freedom for the future had been attained in 1878 when the Colonial Office had agreed to make colonial adherence to British commercial treaties optional; a beginning in positive freedom had come with the inclusion of Canadian with British plenipotentiaries in drafting trade treaties affecting Canada. But the old treaties survived. Some, as with France or Argentina, entitled these powers to any tariff privilege accorded any other foreign power. The treaties concluded with Belgium in 1862 and the German *Zollverein* in 1865 were still more burdensome, as they called for the granting of any tariff privilege accorded even to British goods. Repeated requests from Canada, in 1881, 1890, 1891, had failed to induce the British government, which admitted the impolicy of the latter treaties, to denounce them and so face the prospect of a tariff war for no certain return.

The new government determined to satisfy imperial sentiment and keep its lower tariff pledges by granting

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a tariff reduction on the exports of Britain and other low-tariff countries. If the treaties stood in the way, they would first try to get round them, and if that failed, to break them down. The Fielding tariff provided that a reduction of one-eighth, to be increased a year later to one-fourth, should be granted on imports from "any country" which admitted the products of Canada on terms equally favourable. It was expected that as a matter of fact Great Britain and New South Wales would be the only countries which could so qualify. Sir Charles Tupper at once denounced the proposal as futile, the device of blundering amateurs: the act would be disallowed in Britain; Germany would demand its rights; the government could not play fast and loose with solemn imperial obligations. That the position taken by the government was legally precarious was obvious, but, as Sir Richard Cartwright declared in answer, "we were not born yesterday."

The position taken by the Laurier government is best summarized in a memorandum of council in May, sent in response to a request from the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain. It was contended that the Belgian and German treaties did not apply to Canada, since by 1859 the old province of Canada had been taken out of the category of the colonies referred to in those treaties by A. T. Galt's declaration of tariff independence; that in any case, while "Canada had undoubtedly been actuated by the fact that the mother country was the only nation in a position to enjoy the advan-

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tages to be reaped from the minimum tariff,"¹ yet it was also true that the offer was made to the whole world, no favour was extended to any special country, and if Belgium or Germany could not share, the fault lay with them, since at any moment they could qualify simply by complying with the conditions; if, however, a different view of the effect of the treaty bonds was taken by the British authorities, it would be necessary to ask that "the treaties be denounced in so far as Canada is concerned."

Whatever doubts there might be as to the legal soundness of the government's arguments, there were none as to the popularity of its policy alike in Canada and in Great Britain. In Canada, it was welcomed by free or freer traders as a first step toward Britain's policy, and by imperialists as a return for British protection and a pledge of closer unity. In the mother country, Lord Farrer and the Cobden Club hailed it as an advance on Canada's part toward free trade while Sir Howard Vincent, the veteran Fair Trader, hoped it marked the beginning of inter-imperial preferences and the commercial federation of the Empire. The London correspondent of the "New York Times" fairly summarized British opinion when he declared:

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Colonial Conference, and in their sequel in participation in the Boer War, Canada seemed to the world to have committed herself indefinitely to the laudation and support of the new imperialism which was dominating the policy of Britain.

The new imperialist movement was not peculiar to Britain or to Canada. The whole white world was well in the grip of a passion for expansion, an absorption in *welt-politik*, a scramble for prestige and profit, which was to sweep it on to bankruptcy and chaos. The hopes of world peace and economic harmony men had entertained in the brief interlude of sanity in the sixties, had been shattered and laughed to scorn. National rivalry was yearly growing more intense. The spirit of nationalism drove subject peoples to seek freedom, defeated states to regain their lost provinces, and free and successful nations to find fresh fields for the pride and energy developed in their struggle. Nationalism went to seed in imperialism. It offered a sanction for protectionism at home and economic exploitation abroad. It provided a stimulus to the growth of armaments, needed to protect each state from its neighbours, and confirming in their growth military castes and armament cliques; the dominance Germany enjoyed in Europe after the victory of its efficient military machine over Austria and France, the weight which her invincible navy gave Britain in the councils of the world, stirred emulation. The consolidation of the great states of Europe, attained after centuries of struggle, set them free to join in the scramble for

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make Mr. Laurier, when he comes here in June, far and away the most conspicuous and popular of all the visiting premiers of the Empire.

The government had done all that could be done in Canada. The next step must be taken in London. When in June, 1897, Mr. Laurier sailed for England to take part in the Jubilee demonstrations, his first task was to ensure that in one way or another the preference should stand, and that the "rash and amateur" policy of the government in acting first and consulting later should be justified.

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tages to be reaped from the minimum tariff,"¹ yet it was also true that the offer was made to the whole world, no favour was extended to any special country, and if Belgium or Germany could not share, the fault lay with them, since at any moment they could qualify simply by complying with the conditions; if, however, a different view of the effect of the treaty bonds was taken by the British authorities, it would be necessary to ask that "the treaties be denounced in so far as Canada is concerned."

Whatever doubts there might be as to the legal soundness of the government's arguments, there were none as to the popularity of its policy alike in Canada and in Great Britain. In Canada, it was welcomed by free or freer traders as a first step toward Britain's policy, and by imperialists as a return for British protection and a pledge of closer unity. In the mother country, Lord Farrer and the Cobden Club hailed it as an advance on Canada's part toward free trade while Sir Howard Vincent, the veteran Fair Trader, hoped it marked the beginning of inter-imperial preferences and the commercial federation of the Empire. The London correspondent of the "New York Times" fairly summarized British opinion when he declared:

For the first time in my experience, England and the English are regarding Canadians and the Dominion with affectionate enthusiasm. . . . The spirit of preference for the Mother Country appeals to the imagination here. This change will

¹ A sentence inserted in the draft memorandum, in Mr. Laurier's hand.

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Colonial Conference, and in their sequel in participation in the Boer War, Canada seemed to the world to have committed herself indefinitely to the laudation and support of the new imperialism which was dominating the policy of Britain.

The new imperialist movement was not peculiar to Britain or to Canada. The whole white world was well in the grip of a passion for expansion, an absorption in *welt-politik*, a scramble for prestige and profit, which was to sweep it on to bankruptcy and chaos. The hopes of world peace and economic harmony men had entertained in the brief interlude of sanity in the sixties, had been shattered and laughed to scorn. National rivalry was yearly growing more intense. The spirit of nationalism drove subject peoples to seek freedom, defeated states to regain their lost provinces, and free and successful nations to find fresh fields for the pride and energy developed in their struggle. Nationalism went to seed in imperialism. It offered a sanction for protectionism at home and economic exploitation abroad. It provided a stimulus to the growth of armaments, needed to protect each state from its neighbours, and confirming in their growth military castes and armament cliques; the dominance Germany enjoyed in Europe after the victory of its efficient military machine over Austria and France, the weight which her invincible navy gave Britain in the councils of the world, stirred emulation. The consolidation of the great states of Europe, attained after centuries of struggle, set them free to join in the scramble for

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overseas possessions in which for a century Britain had had no competitor. In Africa and Asia and the isles of the sea—with America barred by the Monroe Doctrine—great states and some of the small made haste to stake out fields for exploitation. In the crowded years since 1880 Germany had appropriated a million miles, Portugal and Belgium, or her monarch, each nearly as much, and France more than all three, while Russia rolled remorselessly across Asiatic plains, and even the United States was soon to enter on its career of Philippine expansion and Caribbean imperialism.

It is not surprising that Britain shared in this movement. She entered it more slowly; satiated with world-wide possessions, experienced in the drawbacks and delusions of empire, checked by vigorous and independent criticism at home, her statesmen never annexed more than their next neighbour's lands, a trifle, in these fifteen years, of some two and a half million miles, ranging from Nigeria to New Guinea. But steadily, as African hinterlands overlapped and states crowded together, as competition in the world's markets grew keener and British trade failed to advance, as the jostling of newer rivals, the preaching of professor and poet dervishes of Anglo-Saxondom, the Seeleys and the Kiplings, left their mark, the British people were stirred to a more aggressive and more conscious share in the race. The decline and defeat of the Liberal party and Liberal opinions was one manifestation of the new tendency; it had been the Liberal policy of granting self-government which had held the white empire together, but

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Liberalism had little in common with this new expansion in tropical lands and among subject peoples. Still more significant was the decision of Joseph Chamberlain, the most forceful character in British politics, on the formation of the new Unionist government of Lord Salisbury in 1895, to choose the hitherto secondary and routine post of Secretary of the Colonies.

As Disraeli had typified the imperialism against which Gladstone had fought, the imperialism which strutted in European council chambers and Indian pageants and cared little for kinsmen overseas or markets for surplus goods, so Chamberlain personified the newer imperialism, with its emphasis on the sublime virtues of the Anglo-Saxon, its reviving interest in the Englishman overseas, its assumption of a mission toward the darker races, and its keenness for new markets. Mr. Chamberlain's imperialism was narrowly racial; there was no room in his empire for Frenchmen or Dutchmen save as they were transformed into Englishmen, while the lesser breeds of Africa and Asia must accept the rule of their trustees for all time: he glorified the Anglo-Saxon race,—“that proud, persistent, self-asserting and resolute stock,” he declared in Toronto in 1887 on his way to the fisheries arbitration at Washington, “that no change of climate or condition can alter, and which is infallibly destined to be the predominating force in the future history and civilization of the world. . . . I am an Englishman. I refuse to make any distinction between the interests of Englishmen in England, in Canada, and in the United States.”

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His other dominating conviction was the need of securing markets overseas if England was to hold her place and her prosperity. In Birmingham in 1894 he insisted,

For these reasons, I would never lose the hold which we now have over our great Indian dependency, by far the greatest and most valuable of all the customers we have or ever shall have in this country. For the same reasons I approve of the continued occupation of Egypt; and for the same reasons I have urged upon the government and upon previous governments the necessity for using every legitimate opportunity to extend our influence and control in that great African continent which is now being opened up to civilization and to commerce; and lastly, it is for the same reasons that I hold that our navy should be strengthened until its supremacy is so assured that we cannot be shaken in any of the possessions which we hold or may hold hereafter.

Such was the frank and arrogant gospel which was now to be pushed with all the vigour of the successful Birmingham merchant and all the adroitness of the most skilful politician in Britain.

In Canada it seemed that the new imperialism was to find full acceptance and justification. The desire for closer imperial unity had greatly strengthened during the nineties. Among English-speaking Canadians pride of race was strong, pride in the unchallenged might of England's navy, pride in the valour and efficiency of her army, pride in the justice and firmness which had marked her foreign policy, pride in the honour and capacity of her Gladstones and Salisburys. The long reign of Queen Victoria had furnished imperial sentiment a rallying-point; her domestic virtues,

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her sorrows, her womanly sympathies, the reflected glories of the Victorian era, and, perhaps not least, the linking of her name with the happiest holiday of all the year, the climax day of springtime, had given her portrait the post of honour in hundreds of thousands of Canadian homes; distance, and the dazzling light that surrounds a throne, had concealed her weaknesses, her persistent and futile efforts to restore the personal control of the sovereign, her jingoism, her dynastic and pro-German view of European politics, and had left the legend of perfection unquestioned. A natural resentment against the aggressive and unneighbourly policy of the United States had strengthened imperial feeling; traditions of the sufferings and the heroism of the United Empire Loyalists were still fresh in many minds, there were still Canadians who were fighting the battles of 1812, and the Venezuela message of Secretary Olney and the prohibitive Dingley tariff played into their hands. Not least important, was the effect of reviving prosperity and confidence, in making Canadians feel they must take a more active and independent part in the world, and must cease to be a colony. It was really a spirit of nationalism that was stirring, but for a time it took the channel of imperialism. Imperial partnership might be a permanent ideal, or it might be only a step toward nationhood, but in any case it represented a distinct advance over colonialism.

As the imperialism of these days was distinctly racial, it was not surprising that the French-Canadian population did not enter into it with enthusiasm. It has already



MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN AND HIS COLONIAL PREMIERS
THE CHAMBERLAIN CONCEPTION OF EMPIRE
Colonial Office, June, 1887

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been observed that the politicians foremost in advocacy of imperial federation were foremost also in the attempt to anglicize Canada, to narrow the use of the French tongue,—the McCarthys, the McNeills, the Tyrwhitts, the Wallaces.¹ To expect active enthusiasm for an Anglo-Saxon empire was absurd. Here and there a French-Canadian public man, notably Israel Tarte, had joined the Imperial Federation League, but the great body stood aloof. With their own mother country, France, they had little contact; immigration had ceased two centuries before, the France of revolutions and anti-clericalism was not the France of old, and the Church had combined with the British government to cut off intercourse with this dangerous land. French-Canadians could not escape from passive colonialism by the road that was being taken by the English-speaking Canadians, and the way of nationalism was not yet open. These oldest sons of Canada could not become Anglo-Saxon, they did not want to become French, they were not encouraged to become Canadian, and so they remained for the present *Québecquois* and *Canadiens*.

Mr. Laurier's attitude toward the issue showed a significant development in these years. His earlier ideal had been an independent Canada. That was "the polar star of our destiny." Nationhood followed on colonialism as manhood after childhood. Only in an independent Canada could the full equality of the two races be attained which was indispensable for lasting unity.

¹ See page 392.

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Now he displayed much more sympathy with the imperialist solution. He had the orator's susceptibility to the sentiment about him. The vision of a French-Canadian standing in the mother of parliaments at Westminster appealed to his imagination. He was deluged with advice from Ontario friends, editors, preachers, politicians, who felt strongly the inspiration or the expediency of imperial unity; Quebec was not vocal. He was deeply anxious to meet Ontario more than half-way, to understand and interpret its sentiments, to review and sacrifice any personal convictions which were not vital and which might stand in the way of harmony. He had a profound admiration for the standards of English public life and for the principles of English liberalism. For the time it seemed to him, as to many other Canadians, that perhaps the share in world affairs which young Canada demanded, might sooner come through some form of limited imperial partnership than through a precarious and burdensome independence. For the present, then, to tack northeasterly rather than point for the polar star.

The Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne had been royally celebrated in 1887, but it had been distinctly an affair for the British Isles. In the new temper of the time it was natural that the Diamond Jubilee should be made an imperial festival, a stock-taking and display to the world of the Empire's resources. The premiers of all the colonies were invited to take part in the ceremonies and to discuss in conference with the Colonial Secretary problems of empire,

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defence and trade and organization. Contingents of soldiers from every colony and dependency were asked to share with British troops the honours of the Jubilee march. Every premier accepted and every colony enthusiastically sent forward its contingent.

Mr. Laurier, who was accompanied by Mme. Laurier, sailed for England on the fifth of June. He looked forward keenly to the experiences of the coming weeks. It was a curious fact that though now in his fifty-sixth year, and for twenty years in public life, he had never before crossed the ocean. The work of his profession, the demands of political campaigns, the attractions of a restful village home, a dislike for travelling, particularly on the ocean, had kept him from any first-hand knowledge of British or French men and affairs. Now that occasion demanded he purposed to probe the experience to the full.

The weeks in Britain were crowded and memorable. A lavish and kindly hospitality filled the visitor's days and nights. "I am not sure whether the British Empire needs a new constitution," Mr. Laurier wrote to a Canadian friend, "but I am certain that every Jubilee guest will need one." Dinners and luncheons, balls and receptions, Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace, Cordwainers' and Fishmongers' banquets, Empire Trade League and National Liberal Club, Dublin and Derry, Edinburgh and Glasgow, the Mansion House and Lincoln's Inn, the gallery of the House of Commons and the naval review at Spithead, garden-parties and country-house week-ends, endless addresses to give

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and endless addresses to receive, D. C. L.'s from Oxford and LL. D.'s from Cambridge ("*Laurea donandas apollinari*," as Dr. Sandys, Public Orator, pardonably punned from his Horace), brought the guests into close if fleeting touch with English life, or at least the England of the governing classes; the other England shouted in the streets or sat down to the dinners which the Princess of Wales provided for "three hundred thousand of my poor."

The Jubilee pageant was a moving and memorable scene. The princes and potentates in scarlet and gold, the magnificent Life Guards and Her Majesty's Prussian Dragoons, the troops from every corner of the Empire,—Maori, Dyak, Haussa, and Sikh, following Canadian, Australian, and Afrikander,—the vast, good-humoured, cheering crowds in the streets, the genuine and warm-hearted enthusiasm that greeted the central figure, the Queen, whose message that morning had been marked with the simplicity of deep emotion,—“From my heart I thank my beloved people; may God bless them,”—all impressed the beholder with the might and vigour of England, the range and the unity of her empire, the greatness that had been and that yet would be. In the long procession the popular favour singled out Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Followed by the Canadian contingent, the troopers of the governor-general's Body Guards and the Royal North-West Mounted Police in their scarlet jackets, the Toronto Grenadiers with their long busbies and the Royal Canadian Highlanders in bearskins and kilts, Sir Wilfrid was recognized by the

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thronging crowds, and next to the Queen herself carried off the honours of the day.

“Sir Wilfrid Laurier”: Mr. Laurier no more. On the day before the Jubilee pageant it had been officially announced that Her Majesty had been pleased to bestow the honour of Knight Grand Cross in the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George upon the Canadian premier as the representative figure among the colonial visitors. Two years earlier, when a heckler at a political speech in the town of Renfrew had inadvertently called him “Sir Wilfrid” he had checked him sharply: “Not Sir Wilfrid; plain Mr. Laurier; I am a democrat to the hilt.” Now this democrat to the hilt rejoiced his Conservative critics and the whole tribe of those who take joy in human frailty and inconsistency by accepting knighthood. In some sorrowing Grit quarters in Canada it became necessary to explain that the chief had taken the honour only after earnest pressure from the Queen, and Tory caricaturists pictured Victoria on bended knee beseeching Wilfrid to accept. The truth was less picturesque but not widely different. The honour had come unsought and unwished. Wilfrid Laurier was frequently called an aristocrat by men who thought that democracy meant mediocrity and vulgarity. He was sufficiently an aristocrat to doubt whether a knighthood could add honour. Earlier in the year he had explicitly and emphatically declined an offer of knighthood, in spite of the urgings of Sir Oliver Mowat, who set greater store on such things. But now the offer came in embarrass-

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sing guise. It had been planned by Lord Aberdeen and Sir Donald Smith, who was himself about to be induced to accept a peerage. Sir Donald informed Mr. Laurier of the proposal shortly after he reached England. Mr. Laurier strongly objected, insisted he must decline. Sir Donald, and later Mr. Chamberlain, declared that his refusal would disarrange the whole Jubilee-honours scheme, that no other premier could be considered representative, and that it would be discourteous to the Queen to decline an offer which had already received her approval, and had already been intimated to the public. Irritated by what he considered officiousness on Smith's part, but not wishing to mar the harmony of the Jubilee week by a refusal, Mr. Laurier assented. He had not even the usual excuse, for Mme. Laurier had no desire to be Her Ladyship.

Not merely in the Jubilee pageants, but on every occasion Sir Wilfrid was the central colonial figure. He stood for Canada, his fellow-premiers stood for a single Australasian or South African colony. The preferential tariff offer had warmed all hearts. The presence of a French-Canadian as a ruler of the greatest British colony touched the imagination. Not least, his own striking appearance, his dignity and courtesy of bearing, his eloquence, of a more glowing and fervid kind than English audiences were wont to hear, and, it must be added, more extended in scope than English after-dinner speeches were wont to be, aroused an overshadowing interest which must at times have somewhat piqued his ten colonial comrades. "For the first time on record,"

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declared the London "Daily Mail" in a burst of extreme condescension, "a politician of our New World has been recognized as the equal of the great men of the Old Country."

In his public addresses Sir Wilfrid emphasized three themes,—that the Empire had endured because based on liberty, that with the growth of the colonies some change in imperial organization, possibly through representation in a central parliament or council, would become essential, and that the Canadian offer of a preference did not call for any preference in return, any abandonment of Britain's free-trade policy.

To drive home the lesson that the concession of self-government alone had saved the Empire, Sir Wilfrid had only to point to the contrast between the rebel Canada of 1837 and the loyal Canada of 1897. The Irish press was quick to apply the moral, but Sir Wilfrid himself, though keenly sympathetic to Irish Home Rule, was careful to avoid on this occasion any direct reference to a question on which British parties were bitterly divided. As to the future, his utterances were less clear. On more than one occasion he took a definite stand in favour of some form of federation. In his first address, given at Liverpool, he referred to Macaulay's forecast of the traveller from New Zealand gazing at the broken arch of London Bridge, and continued:

Those melancholy forebodings have not been realized. The traveller from New Zealand we have here to-day. He is here to-day among us, not to gaze upon a spectacle of ruin and desolation but to be a witness in his own person to a develop-

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ment of British power to the extent of which the imaginative Macaulay could never have dreamt. And the time may come when a New Zealander may stand at the gate of Westminster Palace asking for New Zealand's admission into that historic hall which, having been the Cradle of Liberty . . . [Loud cheers in which the remainder of the sentence was inaudible.]

Later, before the National Liberal Club, he declared that, "it would be the proudest moment of my life if I could see a Canadian of French descent affirming the principles of freedom in the parliament of Great Britain," and, before the members of the Colonial party in a Commons committee room, observed that the national sentiment was growing stronger every day, and would demand expression in representation in the imperial parliament or in some grand national council or federal legislative body representative of the Empire as an organized entity. Yet in these very speeches, and in other phrases he emphasized the national phase: "Colonies are born to become nations. . . . Canada is a nation. . . . Canada is free and freedom is its nationality. . . . Canada is practically independent; in a few years the earth will be encircled by a series of independent nations, recognizing, however, the suzerainty of England. . . . The first place in our hearts is filled by Canada." Addressing the Canada Club, he made it clear that it was only in the future that constitutional change was desirable; that for the present Canada was satisfied. The fact doubtless was that conflicting ideas were struggling for expression and that the formulas of imperial federation were usually readiest to hand. A New York journal surmised that Sir Donald Smith's

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champagne had been responsible for Mr. Laurier's imperialist utterances; in reality it was to a more subtle and intoxicating vintage that something of the credit was to be given,—the pride of imperial might, the applause of tumultuous crowds, the hospitality of famous men and gracious women.

For all the growing activity of the Fair Traders and Mr. Chamberlain's coquetting with an imperial *Zollverein*, Britain was still a free-trade nation. Mr. Laurier kept that basic fact in mind in both his public and his private campaign for the denunciation of the treaties. "The colonies who desired closer commercial relations with Great Britain," he declared at Manchester, "had no idea that this country should abandon free trade; free trade had done too much for England to make a return to protection necessary." The Canadian government, he told a Liverpool audience, had given the preference to Britain out of gratitude, and in the belief that trade beget trade; they had no wish to disturb in any way the system of free trade that had done so much for England. But if the treaties were held to apply, what then? Then "either Canada will have to retreat or England will have to advance." When the Cobden Club, guardian of the ark of Free Trade, presented him with its gold medal for "distinguished services to the cause of international free trade," he replied, on this occasion after the denunciation of the treaties, in still sturdier free-trade tones:

I was a free trader before I came to England. I am still more a free trader having seen what free trade has done for

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England. It is true the dream of Cobden has not been realized. You have what is sometimes termed one-sided free trade. It is true that it is one-sided, but the advantage is not for those nations that have not adopted free trade. . . . In Canada we have had the protective system, and we have to deal with it gradually and carefully. The only reform of a permanent character we have achieved is this, that no duty shall be levied simply for protection, but for revenue. Further than that we cannot go at this moment, but the principle is laid down upon which larger measures can proceed. . . . There are parties who hope to maintain the British Empire upon lines of restricted trade. If the British Empire is to be maintained it can only be upon the most absolute freedom, political and commercial. . . . The more the Empire is free, the stronger it will be. The day will never come, I hope, when the great principle of freedom which prevails in this country, which England has promulgated all through the world, especially through her colonies,—freedom of thought, freedom in religion, civil freedom, and freedom of trade,—the day will never come when this great principle shall decline.

Little did either the Cobden Club or Canada's prime minister dream that in six short years Britain would be swept by a campaign to overthrow freedom of trade, or that, looking backward from that vantage-point, the Canadian preference would be recognized as being not the first step toward Canada's adoption of free trade so much as the first step toward Britain's adoption of protection.

From festivity and feasting the premiers turned to the more serious business of the summer. The premiers of all the self-governing colonies met Mr. Chamberlain in private conference. It was the third of the informal meetings which were eventually to develop into the Imperial Conference. In 1887, at the suggestion of the

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Imperial Federation League, Lord Salisbury had agreed to summon a conference in London of representatives of all the colonies, Crown and self-governing. At the conference Lord Salisbury referred to the three lines along which progress might be made in what seemed the prevalent ideal of making over the British Empire on the German model: a political federation like Germany's was out of the question for the moment; a *Zollverein* was probably not yet feasible, but a *Kriegsverein* was practicable and essential. Little progress was made in either direction, though the Australian colonies promised a contribution for the support of a British squadron in Australian waters; the Canadian representatives, Sir Alexander Campbell, then Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, and Mr. Sandford Fleming, held aloof from the discussion of defence, urging only a state-aided Pacific cable. Seven years later a second conference had been held at Ottawa wherein the chief issue was the development of intercolonial trade. Now a further stage in the shaping of this new organ of the Empire was taken. Only the self-governing colonies were represented, and they were represented by their premiers: government spoke to government.¹ Mr. Chamberlain, who presided, laid the emphasis on the first of Lord Salisbury's three paths: a federal council which could speak authoritatively and without further

¹ The premiers present were: Canada, Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier; New South Wales, Rt. Hon. G. H. Reid; Victoria, Rt. Hon. Sir George Turner; Queensland, Rt. Hon. Hugh M. Nelson; South Australia, Rt. Hon. C. C. Kingston; Western Australia, Rt. Hon. Sir John Forrest; Tasmania, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Braddon; New Zealand, Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon; Cape Colony, Rt. Hon. Sir J. Gordon Sprigg; Natal, Rt. Hon. Harry Escombe; Newfoundland, Rt. Hon. Sir William Whiteway.

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reference to local parliaments should be established. But Mr. Reid would have none of such an inroad upon colonial autonomy and Sir Wilfrid, while prepared to consider such a solution some indefinite years ahead, was not prepared to endorse any immediate change; only Mr. Seddon and Sir Edward Braddon lent any support. As to a *Zollverein*, private discussion had already made plain the difficulty in the way of inducing Great Britain to put a protective tariff on foreign goods or Canada to abolish completely her tariff on British goods, so that Mr. Chamberlain did not now press this solution. All the representatives joined in recommending the denunciation of the treaties. As to a *Kriegsverein*, it was agreed, with Mr. Kingston dissenting, that the Australian naval subsidy should be renewed, but the statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty that they would be very glad to open up similar negotiations with Canada brought no response from Sir Wilfrid, who had already stated in public his dissent from any scheme of naval expenditure for the present. The chief outward result of the five meetings was a resolution approving the periodical holding of similar conferences in the future; the most important outcome, some beginning toward an understanding, on all sides, of the personal factors and the local twists in imperial problems.

It was not until after the conference was ended that the British government announced its decision as to the treaties. The law officers of the Crown had reported that under the treaties Belgium and Germany

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were undoubtedly entitled to the minimum tariff. If, then, Canada was not to retreat, Britain had to advance. On July 30 it was announced that the government had given the year's notice required for the ending of the treaties. On this very day, as the irony of fate would have it, Sir Charles Tupper, who had just arrived in England, gave an interview in which, after declaring with some reason that "the idea proclaimed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier of a great imperial parliament is hopelessly behind the times, and could not succeed," had gone on to denounce the course of the Laurier ministry as "a declaration of independence, an insult rather than a compliment, an absurd scheme." Now the Canadian policy had won. British governments who would not commit themselves on a hypothetical question had met an actual situation; free traders who would not denounce the treaties to permit Canada to grant lower tariff rates in return for a preference from Britain, welcomed a preference given gratuitously. The tactics of the Canadian government in making its decision without consulting the imperial government, the policy of Sir Wilfrid in refraining from demanding what in any case could not have been secured, tariff favours in return, were more than justified by the outcome.¹ "A great triumph for Laurier" was sub-

¹ In accordance with the opinion of the law officers, the Canadian government applied the minimum tariff on goods from Belgium, Germany, France, Spain, the Argentine, and other most favoured nations for the rest of the year. The next budget repealed the reciprocal tariff and established, as from August 1, 1898, a straight British preferential tariff, granting a reduction of one-fourth of customs duties on wares from the United Kingdom and certain of the low tariff British colonies.

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stantially the heading next day in every newspaper in Great Britain.

Before leaving England Sir Wilfrid made a pilgrimage to Hawarden to pay his tribute to the man who for him and for tens of thousands overseas was the living embodiment of liberalism. He was accompanied by Mr. Seddon and by Mr. Reid, as well as by Sir Louis Davies, who had come to England on departmental business. They had a long and animated conversation with Mr. Gladstone. No incident in the whole year gave to Sir Wilfrid such genuine pleasure or such lasting memories. When, a year later, Mr. Gladstone died, that July afternoon gave an added touch of feeling to the words Sir Wilfrid spoke in the Canadian House of Commons, certainly not least among all the tributes paid to the memory of the English statesman who had done more than any other to make England honoured overseas.¹

¹ May 26, 1898: "... It is no exaggeration to say that he has raised the standard of civilization. . . . Indeed, since the days of Napoleon no man has lived whose name has travelled so far and so wide over the surface of the earth; no man has lived whose name alone so deeply moved the hearts of so many millions of men. This last half-century in which we live has produced many able and strong men who in different walks of life have attracted the attention of the world at large, but of the men who have illustrated this age, it seems to me that in the eyes of posterity four will outlive and outshine all others: Cavour, Lincoln, Bismarck, and Gladstone. . . . Mr. Gladstone undoubtedly excelled every one of these men. He had in his person a combination of varied powers of the human intellect rarely to be found in one single individual. He had the imaginative fancy, the poetic conception of things, in which Count Cavour was deficient. He had the aptitude for business, the financial ability which Lincoln never exhibited. He had the lofty impulses and generous inspirations which Prince Bismarck always discarded even if he did not treat them with scorn. . . .

"He ennobled the common realities of life. . . . May I be permitted

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Canada had two mother countries. Sir Wilfrid was eager to see the land of his own ancestors. France—that is, the Paris of the Quai d'Orsay and the journals—was not so eager to see M. Laurier. The relations between Britain and France were strained; regret over Egypt, rivalry over the Soudan, had put Paris in no mood to read with pleasure of this son of New France praising the England that had taken away the first empire of France and was now barring the way in her effort to create a second. It was a difficult situation, but Sir Wilfrid met it frankly. In an interview with President Faure, and in two public addresses, he repeated in Paris the assurances of fidelity to British connection he had given in London, and at the same time revealed a sympathy with France which deeply moved his hearers. Incidentally, his French of Quebec

without any impropriety to recall that it was my privilege to experience and to appreciate that courtesy made up of dignity and grace which was famous all over the world but of which no one could have an appropriate opinion unless he had been a recipient of it. . . .

"In a character so complex and diversified, one may be asked, what was the dominant feature, what was the supreme quality, the one characteristic which marked the nature of the man? Was it his incomparable genius for finance? Was it his splendid oratorical powers? Was it his marvellous fecundity of mind? In my estimation it was not any one of these things. Great as they were, there was one still more marked, and if I have to give my own impression I would say that the one trait which was dominant in his nature, which marked the man more distinctly than any other, was his intense humanity, his paramount sense of right, his abhorrence of injustice, wrong, and oppression wherever to be found or in whatever shape they might show themselves. Injustice, wrong, oppression, acted upon him as it were mechanically, aroused every fiber of his being, and from that moment to the repairing of the injury, the undoing of the wrong, the destruction of the oppression, he gave his mind, his heart, his soul, his whole life with an energy, with an intensity, with a vigour, paralleled in no man unless it be the first Napoleon."

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seemed to pass without question in Paris; in fact, he found occasion to correct a Parisian usage:

Separated from France, we have never forgotten the honour of our origin; separated from France, we have always treasured its culture; separated from France, if we have lost our share of its glories, we have made a conquest always dear to French hearts. . . . In passing through this city, beautiful beyond all cities, I have noted upon many a public building the proud device that the armies of the Republic carried through Europe,—Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Very well; all that there is of worth, of greatness, of generosity in that device, we have to-day in Canada: that is our conquest. We have liberty, absolute, complete, more complete—pardon my national pride for the affirmation I am making—more complete than in any country whatsoever in the world; liberty for our religion, with its worship, its ceremonies, its prayers, its costumes; liberty for our language, which is the official language as English is; liberty for all the institutions that our ancestors brought from France, and which we regard as a sacred heritage. Equality is ours. What other proof of it could I give you than this? In this country, where the majority is of English descent and of the Protestant religion, the last general elections have brought to power a man of French descent and Catholic religion, who has always strongly affirmed his race and his religion. Fraternity is ours. There is with us no domination of one race over another. . . .

If, in becoming subjects of the British Crown, we have been able to keep our ancient rights and even acquire new ones, upon the other hand we have undertaken obligations, which, descended as we are from a chivalrous race, we recognize in full and hold ourselves in honour bound to proclaim. May I be allowed a personal reference? I am told that here in France there are people surprised at the attachment which I feel for the Crown of England and which I do not conceal. Here that is called *loyalisme*. (For my part, may I say in passing, I do not like that newly coined expression, *loyalisme*: I much prefer to keep to the good old French word *loyauté*.) And



A PILGRIMAGE TO HAWARDEN

Louis H. Davies William Ewart Gladstone Richard Seddon
Wilfrid Laurier George H. Reid

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certainly, if there is anything that the story of France has taught me to regard as an attribute of the French race, it is loyalty, it is the heart's memories. I recall, gentlemen, those fine lines which Victor Hugo applied to himself, as explaining the inspiration of his life:

Fidèle au double sang qu'ont versé dans ma veine,
Mon père vieux soldat, ma mère vendéenne.

That double fidelity to ideas and aspirations quite distinct, is our glory in Canada. We are faithful to the great nation which gave us life, we are faithful to the great nation which has given us liberty.

Sir Wilfrid touched on many themes, from the hope that the close friendship that had united France and England in the Crimea would revive, to a prosaic presentation of the possibilities of trade in timber, pulp, and tanning extracts. He made it clear that it was by emphasizing the new nationality they had in common that the two races in Canada were finding unity: "The strength of our race has been not to follow a policy of race. . . . I share fully the opinion of M. LaFontaine, that isolation is always an error and that for us particularly, isolation would have meant sinking in the quicksands of inferiority." Particularly noteworthy was the shade of difference, of qualification, in his reference to Canada's future; in a speech, in English, before the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris, while he still used the formula of imperial representation, his thought was clarifying, and he now emphasized a necessity for preserving legislative autonomy which in reality put parliamentary federation out of question:

I am profoundly attached to British institutions. . . . At the present moment our relations with the mother country suit us absolutely. We are satisfied with our position. We

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are in fact a nation, virtually independent. It is, however, manifest that these relations cannot permanently remain what they are. A day will come, in a future more or less distant, when by the mere fact of our growth in numbers, the colonial tie, light and tenuous though it be, will become heavy because it will no longer correspond to our national aspirations. When that state of affairs arrives, it is evident that the colonial connection must become more intimate or it must break completely. The solution will lie mainly in the hands of England. It may be that this solution will be found in the great principle of imperial representation. The colonies of France are represented in her parliament. Our situation is very different. We have not merely local autonomy, but the most complete legislative independence. If, as the price of imperial representation, we had to renounce our autonomy, our legislative independence, we would have none of it. If imperial representation is to be the solution, it can be only as the complement and not as the negation of that which exists to-day.

More tentative, too, was his favourite dream of a French-Canadian in Westminster, which followed:

Permit me, gentlemen, to add, that if the dream of imperial representation is to be realized, I should regard it as a glorious day when Canada would be represented in the historic halls of the Commons of England by a French-Canadian, who would bring into those new surroundings, along with frank loyalty to British institutions, the logical spirit, the ardour of feeling, the lively imagination, the artistic instinct, the poetic conception of affairs, which from all time has characterized the French genius.

Sir Wilfrid left Paris in better mood than he had found it. The ribbon of the Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour was added to his G. C. M. G. and his Cobden Club medal. In personal discussions with French public men, with M. Faure, M. Cochery, M.

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Hanotaux, M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, M. Jules Siegfried, M. Nisard, he took occasion to urge that good understanding between France and England which was not merely essential for the peace of the world but, what was to a Canadian of more direct concern, essential for the preservation of racial good-will and national unity in Canada. Then, wearied of speech-making and public addresses, with Lady Laurier he spent a few quiet days in country rest, paying a visit to the home of his ancestors in Charente. From France, they went on to Switzerland, and from Switzerland to Rome, where, accompanied by Mr. Charles Russell, they had an hour's cordial interview with His Holiness. Then France again, a brief visit to Ireland,—Dublin, Galway, and Derry,—and home to Canada.

When Sir Wilfrid reached Canada in August, he found a country that for the moment knew no party. Never before and never again was public opinion so united in his favour. There had been Opposition criticism because of his failure to demand preference for preference, but discussion had shown that this criticism was based on a misreading alike of English politics and of human nature. His striking achievement in ending the treaties, the leading part he had taken in all the summer's affairs, the new interest in Canada which his visit had awakened in Europe, the felicitous expression he had given of Canada's homage to the Queen and her attachment to Britain, made friends and opponents join to do him honour. In public and political banquets in Quebec, Montreal, and Toronto, approval

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of his course and pride in his success were given warm and spontaneous expression. His attitude on imperial relations was widely endorsed in English-speaking Canada; Quebec gave little heed. If anything, it was not sufficiently imperialistic for Canada's prevailing mood. Some Toronto newspapers growled at his references to Canada's being a nation; religious journals, the "Witness," the "Westminster," the "Christian Guardian," in their fervent protestations that imperial unity was the goal and imperial federation or defence contributions the way, made it even clearer than the comments of the secular press how the tide was running.

It was two years before the sequel to the Jubilee festivities followed in Canada's participation in an imperial war. On the surface, there was little fresh development of imperial interest or organization. Abroad, the relations with the United States which culminated in the sittings of the Joint High Commission, narrated in the following chapter; at home, the development of the Klondike and of charges against the Yukon administration, the growth of immigration and prosperity, the holding of a plebiscite upon prohibition of import, manufacture, or sale of intoxicating liquors, carried by a slight majority but held of no effect because of the small vote and Quebec's overwhelming opposition, engrossed attention. Yet signs were not wanting that Mr. Chamberlain purposed to push his programme in Canada as well as in other quarters of the Empire. Canada had outdone Britain itself in its expression of imperial sentiment; it would

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be folly not to seek to translate sentiment into action, to fill out and cash blank cheques given over so lavishly. Mr. Chamberlain was not content to wait on Providence, nor wholly content with the trend of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's thinking. While protesting in public that any step toward closer unity must come from the colonies, he neglected no opportunity of preparing the ground.

In the summer of 1898 a new governor-general and a new commander of the Canadian militia were appointed. Lord Aberdeen had been governor-general for five years; he had shown himself a well-meaning, public-spirited official, and Lady Aberdeen's organizing power and interest in social work had given an enduring stimulus to many women's activities. But he was a Liberal, not inclined to press his own views except in an interregnum such as followed the defeat of the Tupper ministry or on some innocuous subject such as civil-service reform; he would not serve Mr. Chamberlain's purpose; on May 13, 1898, he was informed that his "resignation" would be announced in the London press next day. In his place the Colonial Secretary chose a man more after his own heart. The Earl of Minto had not been known to the public save as a soldier; he had seen service under Lord Roberts in Afghanistan, had been military secretary to Lord Lansdowne during his governor-generalship of Canada from 1883 to 1885, and General Middleton's chief of staff in the Riel rebellion. But those who knew him were aware that he was a man of shrewd common sense, of

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serious purpose, strong will, and, not least, imperial enthusiasm, admirably fitted to carry through a Colonial Office programme with firmness and tact. Major-General Hutton, who was selected to succeed General Gascoigne as general officer commanding the militia about the same time, was also a man of strong views on colonial participation in imperial defence, and, as time was to show, not hesitant in urging them.¹

Half-way round the world, the conflict was brewing

¹ Sir Wilfrid's conversational comment on the governor-generals he had known may be noted here:

"The Canadian governor-general long ago ceased to determine policy, but he is by no means, or need not be, the mere figurehead the public imagine. He has the privilege of advising his advisers, and if he is a man of sense and experience, his advice is often taken. Much of his time may be consumed in laying corner-stones and listening to boring addresses, but corner-stones must be laid, and people like a touch of colour and ceremony in life; some men, particularly mayors, even like making formal addresses to governor-generals or any one else who may be compelled to listen.

"Lord Dufferin was in many ways an ideal governor-general for the early stages of the Dominion. His touch of the blarney gave us the good conceit of ourselves needed to help us through our first awkward hobbledehoy years. He had tact and a quick shrewdness that carried him far. He was prone to magnify his office and incidentally Dufferin. He was always speaking to the galleries. He had no special oratorical gift, but a pleasing literary gracefulness. His fellow-Irishman, Lord Lansdowne, was a man of another mould, a strong mind, of clear-cut judgment, distinctly our ablest governor. Lord Stanley was an affable gentleman, no more, but Lady Stanley was an able and witty woman; she did not seek the lime-light, content to shine in the family circle. The warm heart and unresting energy of the Aberdeens are not forgotten in Canada. Lord Minto had much sound sense, a stronger man than was thought. When he came to Canada first, he was absolutely untrained in constitutional practice, knew little but horses and soldiering, but he took his duties to heart, and became an effective governor, if sometimes very stiff. Lord Grey took his duties still more seriously, but scattered his efforts. The Duke of Connaught, the last governor in my day, was the rigidly trained and repressed constitutional monarch, correct and aloof, knowing nothing of Canadian political affairs and caring less; he might well have taken occasion to give a hint to Sir Robert Borden about his dismissals of office-holders."

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which was to give occasion for testing the new forces. In South Africa the relations of Boer and Briton were daily becoming more strained. To the memories of past racial conflicts, galling British memories of Majuba, sullen Boer memories of treks ever northward to escape British domination, there was added the strife between a primitive pastoral people and a cosmopolitan host of gold-seekers. The Outlander had just ground for complaint: the Transvaal administration was unprogressive, corruption was undoubtedly rife in the little oligarchy which surrounded Paul Kruger at Pretoria, particularly among the imported Hollanders, and the fourteen-year franchise shut the newcomers out from a share in the government of the country in which they were fast becoming a majority. Yet the grievances were not so serious as they were represented by the unscrupulous subsidized press of Johannesburg and Cape Town; the Orange Free State, perhaps the best-governed small state in the world, showed what the Boer could do under favouring circumstances; the corruption which existed was hardly sufficient to warrant the Canada of Pacific scandals and McGreevy lootings going Sir Galahading across the world to redress it; and the burgher's fear of being swamped in his own country by a transitory swarm of aliens was not hard to understand. A peaceful way out was not beyond hope; the progressive party among the Transvaalers, led by men like Fraser, Joubert, Botha, was gaining ground against the reactionary forces. Time and good-will would have brought reform. But time

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and good-will were lacking. In the new imperial temper of Britain and the British in South Africa, the Boer had to be taught his place, and that soon, the map of Africa must be painted red from the Cape to Cairo; on the other side, the stubbornness and slowness of Oom Paul, the conviction among many backveldt Boers that the victors of Majuba could once more sweep the *rooineks* from the field and give all South Africa to their kindred, were serious obstacles to peace. The reckless Jameson raid, the warm greeting given his imperial heroes in London, the whitewashing of Rhodes by a House of Commons committee,—with Edward Blake vigorously dissenting from the policy of hushing-up adopted by both Front Benches,—the press campaign, the Prussian stiffness of the proconsul, Sir Alfred Milner, revealed the new aggressiveness of British policy. When in the spring of 1899 the British authorities concentrated on the reform of the franchise as the fundamental concession which would ensure other grievances being righted, the Kruger government after much hesitation and wriggling and hair-splitting gave way and accepted substantially what Chamberlain had demanded. But at once the ground of controversy shifted to the vague issue of British supremacy in South Africa, now held to be threatened by Boer plots; new demands were made or foreshadowed, reckless “squeezed-sponge” speeches hurled from Highbury, the anti-jingo British general on the spot, who insisted that South Africa needed rest, not a surgical operation, recalled, and fresh troops

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ordered to Africa. The Transvaal and Free State Boer refused the advice of his Cape Colony cousins to make further concessions. He was convinced that Chamberlain would be content with nothing short of a humiliating surrender and permanent control, and that his country was doomed unless he fought. On October 9 Kruger launched his ultimatum, demanding arbitration and withdrawal of British troops, or war. On October 12 the Boers fired the first shot.

Canadians, absorbed in their own affairs, had given little heed to the rumblings of war until a few weeks before the outbreak. Of the few who were in touch with the situation, some sympathized with the British policy; others, including men so divergent in view as Goldwin Smith and Principal Grant, until the issue of the ultimatum, had questioned Mr. Chamberlain's tactics. But the great mass of citizens knew little and believed much. They believed that Britain was fighting to free the Outlander from intolerable tyranny. When neutral opinion the world over condemned British policy, Mr. Balfour urged in its defence that the colonies had endorsed it. True, but that approval, so far as Canada was concerned, was not so much an independent and informed judgment on the merits of the issue as an indication of the efficiency of the anti-Boer press service, and still more an expression of trust in British statesmen and in British policy in the past.

Sir Wilfrid had made no special study of the situation. He had followed the development of the crisis

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in the press despatches, with what care the demands of his own duties would permit. He had no small measure of sympathy with the South African Dutch in their resistance to the inroads of British settlement and German-Jewish finance, but believed that with reasonableness a solution could be found in a confederation of South Africa under the Crown. The consideration which turned him strongly against the Boers in the immediate crisis was their denial of the franchise; like many another Liberal, Sir Wilfrid was influenced by Mr. Chamberlain's clever tactics in clothing imperialist policies in radical formulas.

When war became certain, offers of individual or company service and demands for the despatch of a Canadian contingent rapidly developed. The crisis had precipitated imperial sentiment. The desire to repay British protection in the past, to rival the United States, which had just had a more or less glorious little war with Spain, and those Australasian colonies which had already offered contingents; the wide-spread feeling that with increasing strength and prosperity the Dominion should take a more active part in imperial and world affairs; the spirit of adventure and professional military zeal, called for action. Newspaper appeals, particularly on the part of the Montreal "Star," fanned the flames. Sir Charles Tupper, newly returned from England, put himself at the head of the movement for Canadian participation.

The movement was powerfully stimulated by the British authorities and their agents in Canada. Lord

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Minto in the spring of 1899 had conveyed to Sir Wilfrid inquiries from Mr. Chamberlain and the War Office as to the interpretation of the Militia Act:

Can the imperial military authorities accept paragraph 79 as sufficiently binding on Canada to justify them in reckoning *officially* upon the availability of Canadian troops outside the Dominion in case of war with a European power? . . . I am inclined to draw a distinct line between the official calling out by the Queen of Canadian troops for foreign service [i. e. outside the American continent], and the offer of Canadian troops by the Dominion, which I feel certain would be enthusiastically made if the Empire were threatened,—the latter would, however, be a sentimental offer, which could not be considered with purely business calculations.

To which Sir Wilfrid replied that the decisive point was not whether the theatre of war was at home or abroad, but whether the action was for the defence of Canada. Again, on July 19, in a letter frank and enthusiastic to the point of naïveté, the governor-general had written urging an offer of immediate material assistance in South Africa, an offer which would definitely commit the Dominion to participation in imperial wars:

The acceptance of the proposal would be a proof to the world that the component parts of the Empire, however scattered, are prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder to support imperial interests. In this particular crisis a demonstration of such strength would be invaluable, but its effects would, I think, reach far beyond the difficulty of to-day; it would signify the acceptance of a principle which I believe would tend not only enormously to strengthen the Empire generally, but which would also consolidate the individual strength, credit, and security of each of the offspring of the Mother Country.

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. . . It is a principle which appears to me fraught with great possibilities, and personally, as an old friend of Canada, nothing would please me more than seeing her first in accepting it. But as I have said to you already, it is all-important that any such offer as that under consideration should be spontaneous and not merely the result of a desire to meet the hopes expressed at home.

A fortnight later, on July 31, the activities of an agent of the South African League resulted in the House of Commons passing unanimously a resolution, moved by Sir Wilfrid and seconded by Mr. Foster, expressing sympathy with the efforts of Her Majesty's government to obtain justice for the British subjects in the Transvaal. Sir Wilfrid declared:

The object to be sought is that we should extend to our fellow-countrymen in South Africa the right-hand of good-fellowship, that we should assure them that our heart is with them and that in our judgment they are in the right; the object would be to assure the imperial authorities, who have taken in hand the cause of the Uitlanders, that on that question we are at one with them and that they are also in the right; and perhaps the effect might be also that this mark of sympathy, of universal sympathy, extending from continent to continent and encircling the globe might cause wiser and more humane counsels to prevail in the Transvaal and possibly avert the awful arbitrament of war.

Lord Minto, in acknowledging the resolutions, expressed his personal regret that "an offer of material assistance" had not been made instead, though he added:

. . . There has been no question of England asking for troops and no expression of opinion in any way that she could deem herself justified in expecting such assistance; I know, however, privately, as I told you, that if any request was

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made by Canada to send a force to serve with H. M.'s troops; the authorities at home would welcome such a request. . . . You know my own views but I quite recognize the serious considerations connected with such an offer.

Meanwhile, General Hutton's activities in attempting to frame policy and shape opinion, and conflict of views on matters of administrative detail, had brought about very strained relations with the Minister of Militia, which Lord Minto had sought in vain to ease. No narrow conception of his office, therefore, prevented him from discussing with militia officers detailed proposals for a Canadian contingent.

On October 3, the "Canadian Military Gazette," an unofficial publication, announced that in case of war the Canadian government would offer a force from the militia for service, and gave its composition in detail. War had not yet broken out and despatches from London and the Cape held out some hopes that it might still be averted. In an interview the same day with the Ottawa correspondent of the "Globe," Sir Wilfrid denied the rumour as "a pure invention." He made it clear that under the Militia Act the volunteers might be sent to a foreign land to fight, provided Canada was menaced. In the case of the South African Republic there was no menace; "Though we may be willing to contribute troops, I do not see how we can do so." Nothing could be done without a grant from parliament. "There is no doubt," he continued, "as to the attitude of the government on all questions that mean menace to British interests, but in this present case our limitations are very clearly defined. And so it is that

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we have not offered a Canadian contingent to the home authorities. The Militia Department duly transmitted individual offers to the Imperial Government."

On the same day Mr. Chamberlain took a hand in the game by a cable to Lord Minto, which was not received until two days later.¹ In this message, whether from haste or design, Mr. Chamberlain, if he did not accept an offer which had not been made, at least assumed that government action would be forthcoming. No further action was taken for some days. In forwarding the despatch, Lord Minto observed:

So far as I know there has been no offer to raise troops in Canada except that of Colonel Hughes, and the question is whether the Canadian government will itself officially offer troops or whether it will allow individuals to raise them as

¹ "Secretary of State for War and Commander-in-Chief desire to express high appreciation of signal exhibition of patriotic spirit of people of Canada shown by offers to serve in South Africa, and to furnish following information to assist organisation of force offered into units suitable for military requirements. Firstly, units should consist of about 125 men; secondly, may be infantry, mounted infantry, or cavalry; in view of numbers already available, infantry most, cavalry least, serviceable; thirdly, all should be armed with .303 rifles or carbines, which can be supplied by Imperial Government if necessary; fourthly, all must provide own equipment, and mounted troops own horses; fifthly, not more than one captain and three subalterns each unit. Whole force may be commanded by officer not higher than major. In considering numbers which can be employed, Secretary of State for War, guided by nature of offers, by desire that each Colony should be fairly represented, and limits necessary if force is to be fully utilised by available staff as integral portion of Imperial forces, would gladly accept four units. Conditions as follows: Troops to be disembarked at port of landing South Africa fully equipped at cost of Colonial Government or volunteers. From date of disembarkation Imperial Government will provide pay at Imperial rates, supplies and ammunition, and will defray expenses of transport back to Canada, and pay wound pensions and compassionate allowances at Imperial rates. Troops to embark not later than 31st October, proceeding direct to Cape Town for orders. Inform accordingly all who have offered to raise volunteers."

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volunteers on their own responsibility. . . . Up to the present this [a government offer] has not been thought advisable, and you know my views about it, but it may be better to reconsider the question rather than to allow an irresponsible call for volunteers. I can not think it advisable that Colonel Hughes should be allowed to raise an expedition on his own responsibility representing Canada. . . . I think it would be best that any definite action should stand over till you can see me on your return from Chicago.

In accordance with an arrangement of long standing, Sir Wilfrid had left on October 7 to attend an international gathering in Chicago. At the dedication of the new federal buildings, President McKinley, the Vice-President of Mexico, and the Prime Minister of Canada had been invited to officiate. Sir Wilfrid had planned to use the occasion to make a plea for better relations and at the same time to explain why Canada could not give way on its Alaska boundary stand. While his addresses were effective and warmly welcomed, the event was overshadowed by the news from Africa and from home, and he hastened to return to Ottawa.

Sir Wilfrid found a divided country and a divided cabinet. In English-speaking Canada, the war contagion was spreading with the approaching certainty of conflict and the excitement of war preparations overseas. The Opposition, with high imperial patriotism and thirst for office mingled in varying proportions, attacked the government for delay and began to appeal to anti-French-Canadian sentiment. In Quebec, active enthusiasm was almost wholly lacking. The French-

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Canadian did not share the racial sympathy of his compatriots, and had more appreciation of the difficulties of a non-English people surrounded by English folk. "La Patrie," Mr. Tarte's organ, took its stand on the British principle, no taxation without representation; no share in Britain's wars without a share in Britain's councils. "La Presse," the leading independent journal, emphasized very clearly the fundamental difference which determined the attitude of French-Canadians to imperial affairs, and which it took English-Canadians many a year to understand. "We French-Canadians belong to one country, Canada; Canada is for us the whole world; but the English-Canadians have two countries, one here and one across the sea."

The cabinet had to consider the situation more carefully than irresponsible individuals. Granting that Britain's cause was just, was aid necessary? It was assuredly no life-and-death struggle,—merely, in the eyes of British statesmen themselves, a "promenade to Pretoria"; "Punch" was picturing the Boers as clumsy louts falling over their own rifles; as that fervent imperialist, Alexander McNeill, had declared in the House in July, it was hardly necessary "to render assistance to a hundred-ton hammer to crush a hazlenut." Canada had never taken part in any of Britain's "little wars" overseas; Macdonald had declined in 1885 to raise a contingent for the Soudan campaign. Had the government power to act without the consent of parliament? What would be the effect on racial feel-

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ing of action? of non-action? Weighing all these considerations in two days' council debate, a compromise was finally reached. The government would not send a contingent, but it would equip and transport volunteers up to one thousand men, organized as proposed in Mr. Chamberlain's cable. The order in council ran:

The Prime Minister, in view of the well-known desire of a great many Canadians who are ready to take service under such conditions, is of opinion that the moderate expenditure which would thus be involved for the equipment and transportation of such volunteers may readily be undertaken by the Government of Canada without summoning Parliament, especially as such an expenditure under such circumstances, cannot be regarded as a departure from the well-known principles of constitutional government and colonial practice, nor construed as a precedent for future action.

A few days later this action was referred to officially as the despatch of a contingent.

The prime minister had never faced a more difficult situation. His handling of it was criticized by both extremes—by one side for delay and half-heartedness, by the other for sending a contingent at all. More impartial critics, in the light of after events, urged that he should have anticipated the situation and prepared a definite stand. It is true the government lost something of the temporary kudos that attends decisive and spectacular action and suffered the disparagement that attaches to all compromise, but it gained in retrospect in the judgment of all who realized what great issues were at stake. Until the last moment it was not certain that the emergency would arise. Sir

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Wilfrid was not himself given to enthusiasm, and he did not like to be stampeded by the enthusiasm of others.¹ Before committing Canada to a new policy which might carry her in far and unseen paths it was indispensable to await a clear and overwhelming popular demand. Sir Wilfrid's belief, albeit conventional, in the justice of the cause and his imperial sympathies, were balanced by his dislike of war and all that it entailed. It was another factor that turned the scale. For him the essential question was not aid to England, for both the public and the British cabinet had made it clear that it was not aid but a binding precedent that was wanted. In that case the question became, what would be the effect on the cause nearest his heart, national and racial unity? Concluding that with English-speaking Canada blazing in its demand for action and French-speaking Canada lukewarm or silent in its hesitancy, action would best advance that unity, he took the stand he did.

In the country, the decision was substantially accepted. Conservative critics, with some non-party support, continued to rail against the decision not to bear the full cost of the contingent. In Quebec, the careful

¹ His cautious attitude is well revealed in a speech in Bowmanville, on October 17, replying to the criticism that the government had not done enough: "My only answer to that is this: We as a government and especially I as the head of the government have in all these matters to think and go slowly and to act formally and with due consideration. For my part, so long as I have the honour to occupy my present post, you shall never see me carried away by passion or prejudice or even enthusiasm. I have to think and consider. I have to look to the right and the wrong. I have to see what will be the effect of any action that we take."

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phrasing of the offer brought acquiescence; the Liberal members hastened to announce their support of the government's policy. The chief exception, Mr. Henri Bourassa, grandson of Papineau and member for La-belle, who resigned in protest, was more ominous for the future than influential in the present. Mr. Tarte repeated directly, in a correspondence with a former colleague in the Imperial Federation League, Mr. Castell Hopkins, his contention against "being called upon to raise troops and to pay money without having any right of representation in imperial councils," but nothing followed more serious than the burning of Mr. Tarte in effigy in sundry places. But criticism soon was overborne by the rush of preparation and the news from the front.

In some few quarters criticism was directed not so much against the Canadian government as against the British government for forcing its hand. Mr. Tarte voiced this plainly: "It is all very well to say that the people of Canada or of other colonies have made this time a voluntary offer. In point of fact the Secretary of State for the Colonies has sent a circular to all the colonies, the meaning of which is an invitation to send troops." Lord Minto resented this charge, virtuously, because technically no demand had been made; uneasily, because beyond question in fact pressure had been put: "I have always carefully explained to you," he now wrote Sir Wilfrid in a delightful phrase, "that any offer from Canada must be spontaneous." There did not appear to be much ground for complaint. Mr. Chamber-

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lain was only doing his duty as he saw it in trying to commit the colonies permanently to the support of British policy and British arms. If any Canadians had doubts whether that was well for Canada, it was for them to show the same energy and the same single eye to their own country's interests. "Mr. Chamberlain and others," declared a clear-sighted contemporary, "are not academical imperialists, but rather practical men, who use means as well as frame policies. . . . English imperialists have been working for years to bring about imperial co-operation in defence; they did not stop working just when they had the chance to accomplish something signal."¹ No pressure from Mr. Chamberlain or from Lord Minto would have had any effect had not Canadian sentiment met them halfway. With some reason, they considered that they were merely providing an opportunity for the practical expression of a sentiment and a purpose deeply rooted and often proclaimed.

Once the decision was made, no time was lost in recruiting and despatching, on October 30, a battalion of some 1,150, all ranks, under Lieutenant-Colonel Otter. In accordance with public opinion, which was strongly shared by the governor-general and the Minister of Militia, it was arranged, after consultation with the War Office, that the Canadian troops should form a permanent unit, instead of being attached to various British regiments. A week after it had sailed,

¹ W. Sanford Evans, "The Canadian Contingents and Canadian Imperialism," 1901, p. 60.

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the government offered a second contingent: the success of the Boers in forcing the fighting on British territory, the evidence of their skill in marksmanship and entrenching, made it clear the war was to be a serious affair and hardened the determination to see it through. Not until the "black week" of mid-December, when Gatacre was ambushed at Stromberg and Methuen's men mowed down at Magersfontein and Buller repulsed at Tugela River, was the offer accepted: the second contingent consisted of four squadrons of mounted troops and three batteries of artillery. With a gesture worthy of a feudal seigneur or a railway magnate, Lord Strathcona bore the cost of raising the six hundred mounted rifles known as Strathcona's Horse; other forces, mounted rifles and constabulary recruits, were enlisted through the Department of Militia but at the cost of the British government. All told, some 7,300 Canadians sailed to South Africa, of whom one-third were in the official contingents. In addition, the government raised a battalion to garrison Halifax and relieve the Leinsters for active service. The total direct outlay of the Dominion was some \$2,800,000. The contingents were enlisted for a year; once the back of the Boer resistance seemed broken, the men were unwilling to prolong their service.

The Canadian people shared with their British kinsmen the weeks of doubt and dazed surprise that followed Boer victory and British surrenders, the new hope that came with the sending of Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener to take command, the relief that greeted

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the raising of the siege of Kimberley and Ladysmith and Mafeking, and the wild delirium that marked the capture of Pretoria. They had their special pride and their special sorrow: pride in the showing their men made in many a skirmish from Sunnyside to Mafeking and Hart's River, and particularly in the post of honour Canadians held in the capture of Cronje at Paardeberg, the turning point of the war, and sorrow in the lists of casualties that were the price of victory. Perhaps the politic compliments of English statesmen, the kindly references of Lord Roberts, and the warm eulogies of Canadian correspondents—who proved themselves as efficient as their fighting kin—tended to put their achievement somewhat out of perspective. Anticipating a day when rôles would be reversed, American observers asserted that Canada seemed to think she had won the war: “‘Are the Canadians present?’ asks Lord Roberts before every battle. ‘Then let the advance begin,’” was the summary of a Buffalo paragrapher. But if there was warm pride and intense interest, there was little boasting.

The Canadian government had no share in the direction of the war. It did not shape policy; it did not control strategy. Its work ended when the contingents were landed in Cape Town. Canada's rôle was distinctly that of supporting the mother country. The Conservatives who attacked the government for not doing more did not suggest any share in policy but merely an undertaking to repay the full cost of the Canadian contingents. Incidentally this meant

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that Canada had little direct share in the controversies which soon were waging in the country where the responsibility did lie, the charges of blundering incompetency and the counter charges of treason, the recriminations over concentration camps and "methods of barbarism," the disputes as to the terms of peace. In Canada the discussion over the war was more limited in range but more fundamental in character. The question of Canada's external policy, of her place in the Empire, had now been raised by a concrete issue, and in parliament and in the general elections which followed debate was vigorous if not always to the point.

When parliament met in February for its fifth session, each party was preparing its fighting ground for the coming contest. The session was long-drawn-out and bitterly personal and partisan. The only new legislation of importance was the budget measure increasing the preference on British goods from 25 per cent. to 33½ per cent., with Conservative attacks upon the government for not demanding from Britain a preference in return. The war overshadowed all other issues. The government was attacked for doing too little and for doing too much. Israel Tarte faced almost daily assaults because of his own utterances and "La Patrie's" editorials. Echoes of student riots or newspaper controversies were reflected in discussions in the House which frequently rose to fever heat. For a quarter-hour, despite the speaker's efforts, Messrs. Foster, Wallace, and McMullen experimented in how often one could call one's opponent "liar" and "black-

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guard" without infringing the niceties of parliamentary debate. Sir Wilfrid himself was stung into condemnation of the "vile sheets," the "reptile press" that were traducing him. All in all, it was an interesting proof of how war, in Mr. Foster's phrase, "lifted the country to a higher plane with broader ideals and a renovated life."

Sir Charles Tupper attacked the government, and Sir Wilfrid in particular, for doing too little and doing that little late. It had done nothing until forced by the public opinion it had tried and failed to form; it had been niggardly when at last it had acted; out of the fullness of its prosperity Canada could afford to take the honourable, the self-respecting course, and meet the full cost of her contingents. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, one of Sir Charles' lieutenants added, "had been first in the Jubilee parades, and last in the test of action."

In reply, Sir Wilfrid showed conclusively that the same financial policy, in accordance with the request of the British government, had been followed by all the colonies. Instead of defending Tarte he attacked Tupper, quoting his strong condemnation of imperial federation and imperial war outlays before this present sharp curve. No time had been lost, once the die was cast. Sir Charles had called him lukewarm:

Sir, I have no hesitation in admitting that I was not enthusiastic for that war or for any war. I have no sympathy for that mad, noisy, dull-witted and short-sighted throng who clamour for war, who shouted "On to Pretoria," who complacently prophesied that General Buller would eat his Christ-

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mas dinner in the capital of the Transvaal. War is the greatest calamity that can befall a nation.

He was not prepared to go to war automatically. Canada was ready to aid Britain in any life-and-death struggle, but not in every secondary war:

Whilst I cannot admit that Canada should take part in all the wars of Great Britain, neither am I prepared to say that she should not take part in any war at all . . . I claim for Canada this, that in future she shall be at liberty to act or not act, to interfere or not interfere, to do just as she pleases.

While the war might perhaps have postponed or made impossible the one solution which he believed would solve South Africa's problems,—confederation,—he still hoped that after the war, confederation of all the English and Dutch communities would come.

It was nearly six weeks later when Mr. Bourassa made the main attack from the other base. In these weeks temper had been rising both in the House and out; the student riots in Montreal, though exaggerated by rumour, had been serious enough to reveal the abyss of racial passion toward which the country was drifting. The tenseness of feeling and prevailing hostility did not prevent Mr. Bourassa from making fully and coolly an analysis of Canada's position, in a brilliant, closely reasoned, provocative speech. Canada was threatened with ceaseless wars and unbearable burdens; her farmers and workmen would one day be crushed like the peasantry and workmen of Europe. Why had Canada taken part in this war? Because it was just?

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Let British Liberals answer. Because it was necessary? Necessary to aid forty million people to crush four hundred thousand? Because public opinion demanded? Every French-Canadian newspaper, Rouge and Bleu, had been opposed; was parliament to abdicate in favour of yellow journals? The action of other British colonies? Their action had been misrepresented; the cable news had been manipulated to make it appear they had all eagerly offered men; it took months for the mails to reveal that in several Australasian parliaments action had been closely fought and in one case carried only by the Speaker's vote. It was said no precedent had been created: "the accomplished fact is the precedent," as Mr. Chamberlain had made clear in his "insolent reply" to the order in council.

In reply, Sir Wilfrid, after citing some rather dubious precedents for action without parliamentary sanction, rested the case on the demand of public opinion: "Public opinion has many ways of expressing itself. There is not only the press, there is what is heard in the street and in private conversation, and what one can feel in the air." But Mr. Bourassa had considered it weak to be guided by public opinion; true, "if public opinion were to ask something against one's honour or one's sense of right or one's sense of dignity"; not so, if it demands what is right and honourable. He differed with Mr. Bourassa as to the right of the war; England never had fought in a more just cause; Kruger's refusal of the franchise was intolerable. They had not been forced to act by Downing Street: "What we did we

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did of our own free will. . . . My honourable friend says the consequence will be that we shall be called upon to take part in other wars. I have only this to answer, that if it should be the will of the people of Canada at any future period to take part in any war of England, the people of Canada will have to have their own way." He agreed with Mr. Bourassa that if it were to be admitted that Canada should take part in all Britain's wars, it would be necessary to make new constitutional terms; they would have to say to Britain, "If you want us to help you, call us to your councils." But that contingency had not arisen.

The heart of Sir Wilfrid's defence of his action lay in his reference to the threatened cleavage of race:

I put this question to my honourable friend. What would be the condition of this country to-day if we had refused to obey the voice of public opinion? It is only too true that if we had refused our imperative duty, the most dangerous agitation would have arisen, an agitation which, according to all human probability, would have ended in a cleavage in the population of this country upon racial lines. A greater calamity could never take place in Canada. My honourable friend knows as well as any man in this House that if there is anything to which I have given my political life, it is to try to promote unity, harmony and amity between the diverse elements of this country.

In the same spirit, but positive rather than negative, was his closing appeal:

My honourable friend reads the consequences of this action in sending out a military contingent to South Africa. Let me tell you from the bottom of my heart that my heart is full of the hopes I entertain of the beneficial results which

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will accrue from that action. When our young volunteers sailed from our shores to join the British army in South Africa, great were our expectations that they would display on those distant battle-fields the same courage which had been displayed by their fathers when fighting against one another in the last century. Again, in many breasts there was a fugitive sense of uneasiness at the thought that the first facing of musketry by raw recruits is always a severe trial. But when the telegraph brought us the news that such was the good impression made by our volunteers that the Commander-in-Chief had placed them in the post of honour, in the first rank, to share the danger with that famous corps, the Gordon Highlanders; when we heard that they had justified fully the confidence placed in them, that they had charged like veterans, that their conduct was heroic and had won for them the encomiums of the Commander-in-Chief and the unstinted admiration of their comrades, who had faced death upon a hundred battle-fields in all parts of the world—is there a man whose bosom did not swell with pride—the pride of pure patriotism, the pride of consciousness of our rising strength, the pride of consciousness that that day it had been revealed to the world that a new power had arisen in the West?

Nor is that all. The work of union and harmony between the chief races of this country is not yet complete. We know by the unfortunate occurrences that took place only last week that there is much to do in that way. But there is no bond of union so strong as the bond created by common dangers faced in common. To-day there are men in South Africa representing the two branches of the Canadian family, fighting side by side for the honour of Canada. Already some of them have fallen, giving to their country the last full measure of devotion. Their remains have been laid in the same grave, there to rest to the end of time in that last fraternal embrace. Can we not hope—I ask my honourable friend himself—that in that grave shall be buried the last vestiges of our former antagonism? If such shall be the result, if we can indulge

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that hope, if we can believe that in that grave shall be buried the former contentions, the sending of the contingents would be the greatest service ever rendered to Canada since Confederation.

Nine Quebec members, five Liberal and four Conservative, supported Mr. Bourassa.

Sir Wilfrid had refused to commit himself to any permanent policy or doctrinaire position. The debates had developed three distinct attitudes toward the Empire among his compatriots. There were those, like the distinguished Bleu veteran, T. C. Casgrain, who were grateful for British protection and for the liberties accorded Roman Catholics, and were prepared to continue the colonial connection indefinitely, giving moderate aid when Britain desired. There were those, like Dominique Monet, who looked forward to clear-cut independence, and wanted neither colonial passivity nor imperial entanglements. There were those, like Mr. Tarte, who still looked forward to some form of political imperial federation, but opposed in the meantime any support of military policies they had no responsibility for shaping. To none of these positions did Sir Wilfrid commit himself; only one situation could be met at a time; in every situation, how best to conserve Canadian unity must be the determining motive.

A year later, Mr. Bourassa returned to the fray, and once more gave Sir Wilfrid occasion to set out his own views more comprehensively than in the day-to-day discussion. On March 12, 1901, Mr. Bourassa

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moved a resolution in the House requesting His Majesty's government to conclude an honourable peace in South Africa on a basis of independence, and declaring against any further despatch of contingents from Canada. It was not, he declared, solely for the British government to advise His Majesty, particularly when Canadian blood and money had been spent in a war not of our making. The Chamberlains of to-day, seeking power and profit out of aggression, had little in common with the men of the past who had made England great. Quebec had been and still was a unit against the war, and elsewhere in Canada the wave of jingoism was receding. It was time for Canada to make her position clear. In reply, Sir Wilfrid noted with surprise that the man who had been opposed to sending troops was so ready to send advice. It was unnecessary to discuss the question of sending further troops, for the war was over, except for guerilla efforts. As to the proposal to restore the two republics to independence, that was now too late: "These men [Kruger and Steyn] appealed to the God of battles, and the God of battles has pronounced against them. They invaded British territory, their territory was invaded in turn, and it was annexed to the British domain in consequence of the terrible logic of war." He went on to review the Boer policy, condemning the merciless taxation and the refusal of franchise privileges in the Transvaal. Not Chamberlain but Kruger was responsible for the war. To his mind the strongest evidence of that crucial fact was the criticism

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of the Boer policy contained in the published letters of Sir Henry de Villiers, Chief Justice of Cape Colony, to President Steyn.¹ He concluded:

The problem of South Africa is this,—that you have in that country two races, so linked and so intermingled that it is not possible to separate them. These two races must be

¹ Sir Wilfrid, in the early stages of the conflict, had been influenced in his opposition to Kruger's position by the knowledge that Chief Justice de Villiers, whom he had met and come to regard very highly in London during the Jubilee, was a strong critic of Kruger's conservatism and had publicly and privately—as intercepted letters afterward showed—urged the Boers to yield to the British demands. He was, therefore, the more impressed, as was Lord Minto, by letters of the Chief Justice giving another angle:

13 May, 1901.

"... I quite agree with you that President Kruger ought to have displayed more liberality toward the newcomers but I fear that the exaggerated and distorted accounts which have been sent over of Boer oppression have affected your judgment in the same way as they have affected the judgment of the great majority of the British people. 'The policy,' you say, 'of admitting settlers simply to make helots of them, is intolerable.' I have traveled a good deal over the world and have nowhere seen a more flourishing people than these so-called 'helots' were before the war. They looked with utter contempt upon the President and his people, and I quite agree with Lionel Phillips that the great majority of them did not 'care a fig' for the franchise. Be that as it may, the President did induce the *Volksraad* to pass a law conferring the franchise on outlanders after seven years' residence. That law was somewhat clogged by undesirable conditions, but before the negotiations were closed the President consented to a proposal which had been made by Mr. Chamberlain himself that the law should be submitted to a joint commission for amendment. The answer he received was that the offer now came too late and that the British government would formulate their own demands. Meanwhile troops were being moved from all directions toward the Transvaal. Thirteen eventful days passed during which both Presidents implored of the British government to state their demands for consideration. No answer came and in a fit of frenzy, which I for my part would not wish to excuse, Kruger issued his arrogant ultimatum. But can any one doubt that the issue was forced upon the Transvaal government? The information before them was such as to convince them that their independence was aimed at. Chamberlain of course did not wish for war if he could attain his objects without war, but those objects were utterly inconsistent with the continued independence of the state. No British Colony

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governed by the same power and the same authority, and that power has either to be the power of England or the power of the Dutch. It has either to be the liberal and enlightened civilization of England to-day or the old bigoted and narrow civilization of the Dutch of two hundred years ago. Let Mr. Bourassa forget for a moment that he and I are British subjects, and in the name of civilization, in the name of humanity, I ask him, which is the power to govern in that distant land? . . . There is but one future for the Dutch. They have

enjoying responsible government would have borne with the interference with its internal affairs to which this nominally independent state was being subjected. The negotiations should be read by the light of the historical events which preceded them and if so read I cannot understand how any impartial person, with any sense of justice or fairness, can support Chamberlain's action. The chief argument that I now find adduced on the British side is that the unpreparedness of Great Britain shows how little its rulers wished for war. The real fact, however, is that the government believed itself to be prepared and never expected that it would require more than 20 or 30 thousand men to promenade to Pretoria and reduce the Boers to subjection. Believe me, dear Sir Wilfrid, that a supreme tragedy is being enacted in South Africa. The British people, who deplored the fate of Dreyfus, are unjustly accusing and punishing a whole people. Their minds have been poisoned by a venal press and by lies which have been sown broadcast over the land at the bidding of a capitalist clique which owes all its wealth to the liberal gold-mining laws of the republic. Up to the commencement of the war Her Majesty had no more loyal or law-abiding subjects than the Dutch of the Cape but their sense of loyalty and of affection for the Empire has been completely destroyed by the unjust attack upon the liberties of a neighbouring people to whom they are related by the closest ties of kinship. The abuse heaped upon the Dutch since the war by the English press has tended still further to alienate them. . . .

"You suggest in your letter that I should try to influence the leaders of the republics to put an end to a needless war. Even if I were in South Africa there would of course be no means of communicating with the enemy. Knowing, myself, the benefits of British rule, I should be very glad if I could induce the Boers to submit and cordially accept such rule. But with these people the preservation of their independence is a sacred mission. It may be a foolish sentiment but I cannot help respecting it. To us it may seem foolish and indeed wicked to prolong a war which can have only one issue, but to them submission, especially after the declarations of the British government, probably appears to be nothing short of a crime."

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been conquered, but I pledge my reputation and my name as a British subject that if they have lost their independence they have not lost their freedom. There is but one future for South Africa, and that future is a grand confederation on the pattern of the Canadian confederation. It is a federation in which Cape Colony and Natal and the Orange Free State and the Transvaal and Rhodesia shall be united together under a federal constitution, under the British flag, and under the sovereignty of England. Mr. Bourassa will agree with me that when they have the British flag over South Africa they shall have that which has been found everywhere during the last sixty years under the British flag—liberty for all, equality for all, justice and civil rights for English and for Dutch alike. For these reasons I have to ask the House that they shall not agree to this motion but shall vote it down.

The resolution was defeated by a vote of 144 to 3.

Before this second debate, the general elections, in which the war was fought over at the polls, had been held in November, 1900. Canada's prosperity, the question of a free or a bargained British preference, the administrative record of the government, were all in debate, but in Ontario and Quebec the war issue was dominant. The campaign was intensely personal. The apparent victory of British arms had eased the tension somewhat, but racial appeals were still temptingly easy. Undoubtedly English-speaking extremists had been responsible at first for the rise of racial bitterness, greeting wholly legitimate arguments on the merits of the war and Canada's participation with shouts of disloyalty and threats, in the words of the Toronto "News," that British Canadians would find means, through the ballot-box or otherwise of "eman-

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icipating themselves from the dominance of an inferior people that peculiar circumstances have placed in authority in the Dominion." But Quebec extremists also had their share of responsibility, picturing all Ontario as made up of such fanatics, and urging French-Canadians to stand solidly behind a French and Catholic premier. A curious twist in the campaign came with Sir Charles Tupper's endeavour to prove to Quebec that Sir Wilfrid was the real imperialist, and that he himself had chief credit for smashing the Imperial Federation League. "Sir Wilfrid Laurier is too English for me," Tupper declared in a speech at Quebec. While it was true that a strong nationalist, such as Sir Charles was, might with some consistency oppose imperial centralization and at the same time urge an active part in an imperial war as an evidence of growth to the responsibilities of nationhood, yet the double attack and the appeal to the prejudices of both sections was a hard position to defend to fair-minded men.

During the session a severe illness of Mr. Tarte had made it impossible for him to carry on his duties; to secure a change of climate and lighter work he undertook to act as Canadian commissioner at the Paris Exposition of 1900. Yet not even with the ocean intervening could Israel Tarte keep out of politics and of trouble; speeches in Paris, which grew by the time they reached Canada, roused Ontario by their criticism of British policy and Quebec by their advocacy of imperial federation. In correspondence with him Sir Wilfrid reflected the campaign:

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(*Wilfrid Laurier to Israel Tarte.—Translation*)

Ottawa, April 6, 1900

MY DEAR TARTE:

. . . Here things are going well. Fielding's budget speech, as you may have gathered from the echoes which reached you, was a very great success. The financial situation is excellent, and it was presented with the clearness and the nervous force which characterize Fielding. The Opposition do not know which foot to put forward, and are trying to make protection and the preferential tariff march abreast. It is a task too great for them and too great for anybody else.

I am sending you the speech that Sir Charles Tupper made at Quebec, with the obvious purpose of catching our province. You will see that the outstanding feature of the new programme is to identify us, at any cost, with imperial federation. I cabled you yesterday on this subject, and you will understand better now the purpose of my cable. Imperial federation, at the present time, is not a practical question, and there is no use in our playing our adversaries' game. All that we have to do is to set things precisely as they are before the public of our province and to see that the attention of the electorate is not turned from serious things to be affrighted by chimeras. . . .

In referring to incorrect interviews in "Le Matin," and the Montreal "Star's" inaccurate translation of what he had really said to "Le Journal"—opinions "which are true and are not impolitic"—Mr. Tarte showed himself gifted with prophecy, or perhaps only a good memory:

Bear in mind that I am not complaining of anything. I have been in journalism too long to be hurt. Only, it is annoying for me to think that perhaps the Liberal party is being hurt by all these attacks directed against me. And yet, how great a man I would become, in the Tory press, if I were to leave your cabinet to-morrow!

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Sir Wilfrid replies:

(*Translation*)

Ottawa, April 30, 1900

. . . A word now as to the evolution that Tupper is trying to go through in the province of Quebec. It is not being done at all in the way you assume. The campaign in Quebec is not against military imperialism but against parliamentary imperialism. Many of your speeches and a few of mine are the fodder they are throwing to our province. I do not, however, believe that the movement will be serious; so far, it is not. It may produce a certain alarm, but the position in which Tupper has placed himself is a false one. It has been very well analyzed by Tardivel in "La Vérité." Tardivel does not love us; he especially handles without gloves, but he makes very clear the distinction that exists between what he calls parliamentary imperialism, which, for that matter, he declares impossible, unrealizable, and the military imperialism of Tupper, which he regards as a reality.

. . . Nothing is more dangerous, in my opinion, than the reporters. They take a thought on the wing and develop it in the direction of their own opinion. I fancy that something of the kind is what happened with you and the "Le Matin" reporter.

(*Israel Tarte to Wilfrid Laurier.—Translation*)

Paris, May 7, 1900

MY DEAR SIR WILFRID:

Although I have enough here to keep me busy, I will not conceal from you the fact that I am beginning to be bored. Either one is in politics or one is n't; that becomes more and more clear to me. If I were to leave the cabinet to-morrow, my interest would turn in other directions. But so long as I am a minister, I shall worry about my department and my party whenever I am not in the thick of the fight.

Sir Charles Tupper's *volte-face* has completed his discredit in London. Your government is very popular in England, but less so on the Continent, and especially in France. At

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a reception the other day at the Department of Commerce, M. Delcassé accosted me with the remark: "Ah, you have been giving a preference of 33% to England." I replied that we are very rich, and that we are always pleased to grant favours to countries that admit our products free.

(Wilfrid Laurier to Israel Tarte.—Translation)

Ottawa, May 20, 1900

The session is now distinctly in our favour. The Opposition played a last card on the unfortunate West Huron and Brockville affairs [charges of by-election corrupt practices]. We have got around the difficulty by granting a commission which will not merely concern itself with Brockville and with West Huron, that is to say with our peccadillos, but will look into the peccadillos of our adversaries. They will inquire into all the affairs of this kind whether on the Conservative or on the Liberal side, which have adorned the political history of Ontario for some years past. Our policy on the matter was a surprise to the Opposition; I believe it was a happy inspiration. I expect that a few of our friends, fortunately not in high places, will be more or less sprayed, but our adversaries should suffer more than we as the result of the inquiry. However that may be, the system in vogue in Ontario is deplorable; it must be ended. For my part, I am ready to put an end to it, even if that involves exposing ourselves to blows. That is the only honourable means of extricating ourselves from a deplorable situation in which we have been involved by contemptible jobbers.

Despite the vigorous Opposition assault, the elections resulted in a distinct gain for the government. In Ontario it lost fourteen seats; the larger cities and the constituencies in which in 1896 the strong Protestant vote had gone against the Tupper cabinet, now swung back. Quebec, largely for the reverse of the reasons that brought loss in Ontario, voted nearly solidly Liberal, the Conservatives retaining only seven

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seats out of sixty-five. The Maritime provinces were not carried away by racial cries as much as either of the larger provinces,—“Imperialism is a local issue,” one Maritime politician had parodied—and the West, thankful for the new prosperity, went strongly government. Sir Charles Tupper, Mr. Foster, and Hugh John Macdonald, who had given up his Manitoba premiership to aid them, were all defeated. The government was given a new lease of life.

CHAPTER XII

THE UNITED STATES: 1896-1903

Colony and Republic—A policy of Friendship—The Dingley Tariff—The Joint High Commission—Success and Failure—The Alaska Boundary—Negotiations for Settlement—Arbitration and Arbitrators—A Diplomatic Decision—Canadian Protests—Laurier and the Treaty-Making Power.

IN the Laurier government's early years, as in its last years, the relations of Canada with the United States were a constant preoccupation. They presented a double difficulty. One was the question of status,—the question how far, if at all, a colony could have dealings with a foreign country. The other was the difficulty of the specific issues, the boundary controversies which from time to time threatened the peace of the continent.

The question of status complicated every issue. The course of transition from colony to nation was slow and uneven, and the control of foreign affairs was its last stage. In its participation in the South African War, Canada had made its first venture into overseas foreign affairs. With its own continent, its relations were of much longer and more intimate standing, so much so that many Canadians then as later failed to recognize in these familiar line-fence disputes with its neighbour the very controversies which were the staple of diplomacy in older lands. Canada, it was held, had no

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voice in foreign affairs: foreign affairs meant the pomp and circumstance of formal diplomacy, the gold and lace of ambassadors, bristling cannon along the border. There was a measure of justification in this failure to see that Canada was in fact dealing every day with "foreign affairs," since her political intercourse with the United States was for the most part indirect, filtered through British agencies. Miss Ottawa had a voice, but etiquette forbade her speaking to Mr. Washington except through Papa London. Yet slowly this convention was giving way. Canadian representatives had come to share in British negotiations with the United States on Canadian issues, first as subordinate purveyors of information, later as full if minority plenipotentiaries of the Crown. Sir Charles Tupper's masterful insistence had even threatened to short-circuit the triangular intercourse, Ottawa-London-Washington. Now a further advance was to be effected.

The specific issues which faced the Laurier government in its relations with the United States were many. Along a three-thousand-mile boundary there was ample room for differences. In the mood that had marked public opinion during the years that had passed, the assured self-sufficiency of the United States, the indifference of Great Britain, the petulant suspicion of Canada,—these differences had hardened into antagonisms. Not a single old issue had been finally settled, and new ones were constantly rising. The question of the rights of United States fishermen in

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Canada's Atlantic waters had been met in 1888 by a *modus vivendi*, but the Canadian fishermen still sought a permanent settlement on the basis of free fishing for free fish. The rights of Canadian sealers in Bering Sea had been upheld by a court of arbitration in 1893, but the five-year experiment in restricted pelagic sealing then effected was drawing near its close and chaos loomed again. The reciprocal privilege of transporting goods across the frontier in bond to seaport, or to another part of the country of origin, rested on no firm treaty basis. The desire of United States ship-building plants on the Great Lakes to share in building the new navy had led to demands for revising the Rush-Bagot gentleman's agreement of 1817, limiting armament in boundary waters. The congressmen who had enacted, and the De Barrys who had administered, the Alien Labour Law barring the incoming of workmen under contract had created in Canada a demand for repeal or retaliation. The discovery of gold in the Klondike was soon to give new urgency to the settlement of the last undetermined boundary, along the panhandle strip of Alaska through which Canada had to seek access to its own hinterland. Liberal policy in the past and threatening United States developments in the present gave a new angle to the eternal trade and tariff issue. All told, no lack of difficulties, or opportunities.

The temper of the time was unfortunately not favourable for a frank and friendly settlement. In the United States, the unrecking, provincial assurance of

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Canadian minister at Washington, and it was not desirable to invoke the aid of the British minister, Sir Julian Pauncefote, until a more formal stage in any possible negotiations should be reached. At this juncture, Mr. John Charlton, who had been born in the United States and still had close business relations across the border, offered his services to visit Washington and sound Mr. Dingley, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and other friends in Congress. Mr. Laurier agreed, impressing the need of making it clear that he had no official standing, a warning which it was soon necessary to emphasize:

(Wilfrid Laurier to John Charlton)

Ottawa, January 18, 1897

MY DEAR CHARLTON:

There is a report current in all the newspapers that you have been sent to Washington on an official mission. I depend on you to contradict this report yourself. In the correspondence exchanged between us, you remember that you told me that it was absolutely useless to send anybody on an official mission to Washington until the new Administration had been installed in office. This seemed to me perfectly reasonable, and my colleagues shared in the same opinion. But while it was inadvisable to send a Commission to Washington, it is quite proper that as many prominent Canadians as possible should visit Washington and come in touch with the leaders of the Republic. In that connection it is therefore quite advisable that you should go, but I wish you would be careful to let it be known that you came simply as a citizen of Canada, and in no other capacity. I wish also that you would utilize your stay there to obtain information and for nothing else. . . .

We must hold our hands free to deal in any direction which the interests of Canada may demand, and whilst for my part